FREDERICK THE GREAT

BY VICTOR THADDEUS

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THE GREAT

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VOLTAIRE
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Frederick as a young king of thirty

FREDERICK THE GREAT

THE PHILOSOPHER KING

By

VICTOR THADDEUS

NEW YORK

BRENTANO'S · PUBLISHERS

MCMXXX

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Published October 1930
Second Printing October 1930

TO MY MOTHER

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FREDERICK
THE GREAT

Part One

BORN TO BE KING

I

BERLIN, one midwinter day of the year 1712.

The snow-covered town is clamorous with the pealing of churchbells, with the bellowing of cannon on the ramparts, with trumpets and kettledrums. Through the gates couriers issue upon the white and windy plain of Brandenburg, carrying to foreign courts the news that the Princess-Royal of Prussia has given birth to an heir.

In the month of January — the *Coronation* Month! Then he will certainly live, not die in infancy like the two others! This is the thought of the bent old man who rises from his dinner and heralded by flourishes of trumpets and bowing chamberlains goes to congratulate the mother.

The Elector of Brandenburg and King in Prussia is not actually an old man when his third grandson is born. Were he stronger constitutionally he might live another twenty years. But an accident in childhood injured his back — now at fifty-four his stooping posture makes him appear quite decrepit. Nor has life in recent years treated him kindly. His son, the Prince-Royal, becomes every day more boorish, and the young wife he married recently has gone insane.

He looks old and he feels old. The grandfather's nervous hands fumble now with the enormous peruke — made in Paris — which cascades over his bowed shoulders, now with the gold and diamond buttons on his coat. But he must

see the boy christened before he dies! This very month, though only a week remains of it, the ceremony shall take place!

Well may the bent old grandfather be superstitious about the month of January, for was it not in January exactly eleven years ago that he — until then a mere elector like his ancestors — placed a crown on his own head at Königsberg and thereby became the first Hohenzollern king?

Christened in January the boy will live, christened in February he will assuredly die. . . . Today is the twenty-fourth, is it not? . . . Hurriedly the King sends for his chamberlains. . . . On the thirty-first the stately christening procession moves between files of gorgeously costumed Swiss Guards to the baptismal font in the palace chapel where the King, the Prince-Royal, and the sponsors — representatives sent by the Emperor, Czar Peter, Holland, and the Electors — stand waiting. The week-old child, swaddled in a long heavy cloth-of-silver robe studded with diamonds, six countesses supporting the train, wears on his soft diminutive head a hard gold crown. If he lives he will be the first Hohenzollern born to inherit a throne, for his father, the thickset athletic-looking young man standing beside the King, came into the world thirteen years before the coronation at Königsberg.

In honor of the old man who takes him in his arms the child is named Frederick.

II

This Hohenzollern family, which in the opening year of the eighteenth century was grudgingly admitted to the European family of kings, had its home originally in a feudal castle on a hilltop near the Black Forest — a spot from which could almost be detected the glitter of Lake Constance in the Alps, and lying seven hundred miles to the southwest of that Prussian

town on the Baltic where was founded in 1701 the new royal dynasty.

They wandered north. . . . In the twelfth century one of them, Conrad, became Burgrave of Nuremberg. His descendants married well. Not yet electors, they soon had considerable influence in the choice of the emperors. In an evil moment a Hohenzollern used his money and men to put the imperial crown on the head of a certain ambitious Rudolph, Count of Hapsburg, on which head, and the Hapsburg heads that came after it, long after the Holy Roman Empire had ceased, in Voltaire's words, to be either holy, or Roman, or an empire, this crown was destined to remain for the next five centuries.

Still north they went. . . . Early in the fifteenth century a Hohenzollern bought Brandenburg and with it the electoral dignity. Frederick was the name of this first Hohenzollern elector; Frederick, two hundred years later, will be the name of the first Hohenzollern king.

There followed nine generations of Hohenzollern electors, governing in Brandenburg. The ninth, George William, brought disaster upon his country during the Thirty Years War. He himself was Protestant, but his minister, Schwarzenberg, who controlled him, Catholic. George William could not make up his mind which side to fight on. Brandenburg, under this vacillating elector, became the battlefield of Europe, and was pillaged with equal zest by the armies which deferred to the Pope as the Vicar of Christ and those others which with Luther called him the Devil's Hog.

His successor's character and achievements were so outstanding that he became known as the *Great* Elector. The Great Elector's name too was Frederick—Frederick William. He ruled Brandenburg forty-eight years, and acquired for the Hohenzollerns the duchy of East Prussia. He threw Swedes and Austrians alike out of his electorate, created for defense

the first real Prussian standing army, and died having devoted his whole life to repairing the havoc wrought by his father's irresolute character during the Thirty Years War.

Now came the grandfather of the boy born in midwinter of this year 1712. The Great Elector's son and successor, this half cripple whose spine was nearly broken by a fall in a jolting coach, had none of his father's rude energy. But very early he began to cherish a brilliant dream — he saw himself going down in history not only as one of the nine electors who voted for the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire but also as an independent monarch. . . . A throne — a crown — Friedrich *Rex!* . . . Years of intrigue at Vienna, culminating with a loan to the Emperor of several thousand troops during the war of the Spanish Succession, and his dream came true.

The ceremonious old King with the weak back only lives a year after the christening of his grandson.

III

Frederick's father, the new King, does not call himself Frederick II. The sturdy swine-hunting Prince-Royal — who blushes easily, and therefore as a boy used to sit in the sun to brown his face — would feel his cheeks burn at the Grand-Monarch antics of his dead parent. Of all his ancestors he admired most the simple and energetic Great Elector. He ascends the throne under the name of Frederick William the First.

This second of the Hohenzollern kings is twenty-four at the time of his accession. . . . A stoutish heavy-fisted young monarch, with an obstinate jaw, whose blue eyes take on a dangerous glitter, whose florid cheeks darken to an ominous red, when (as not infrequently happens) he loses his temper. . . . He eats voraciously, drinks all the beer he can get, and — with a back certainly not weak like his father's — his favorite

outdoor sport is careering madly over the rough Brandenburg countryside by his hunting castle of Wusterhausen astride a *wurst-wagen,* in pursuit of wild sows.

He had hated all that pomp and ceremony of court life which Frederick I's more vainglorious nature craved. He saw with shamed eyes, as Prince-Royal, how the older royal houses mocked at his father's attempts to be a German Louis XIV — the way their grins, the glances interchanged, proclaimed that here was a king, true, but one raw, newly distilled, not yet aged in the wood like the Bourbons and Hapsburgs.

To attempt to repeat at Potsdam the splendor and extravagance of Versailles — what folly! . . . Never to move a step without flourishes of trumpets, beating of drums! . . . Half a hundred chamberlains with goldsticks always running on ahead! . . . Big imported French wigs wagging on every side, gold distributed to them by the handful, but no real work ever done in return.

If the father is too much the King to watch where the money goes, not so the son. Frederick William's chief outdoor sport may be swine-hunting, to go a-yelling over the fields, his legs wrapped around a stuffed pole, waving a bottle in one hand and a sowspear in the other, but his robust animal nature still has room for a marked vein of thrift. His favorite indoor sport has long been counting coins. As a boy even he hid away carefully all loose ones that came into his possession, and kept track of them in a notebook entitled *Rechnung über meine Ducaten* — "An Account of my Ducats."

IV

Very quickly after he becomes King he shows how he is going to rule.

He walks with a heavy ominous tread from the death

chamber through the anxious throng of chamberlains, pages and courtiers, and shuts himself up for a while in his own rooms. Then he orders the Lord Chamberlain to bring him a complete list of the people on the Court payroll. Through this list he draws a thick line from top to bottom. All had better begin looking around for new jobs for he keeps them only until after the burial.

For two months, while preparations for the fine funeral which he intends to mark the end of this extravagant reign are under way, he prolongs the life of Court ceremonial. The master of ceremonies he once tripped up and helped with his foot to the bottom of a staircase, the courtiers whose wigs he had snatched off and thrown into the fire when he found them standing in an anteroom warming themselves at a stove, their heads foppishly thrown back for fear of scorching the expensive imported ringlets, these and the legion of other useless ones may stay to see their "good master," as they now wailfully call the dead King, put away underground — then, if physically fit, they can either join the army or find employment outside of Brandenburg.

A fine funeral — that shall be the end! For eight days Frederick I is exhibited to whoever cares to see him. On a bed of state he lies, the bent shoulders wearing a cloak of royal purple and ermine, sceptre and sword beside him, crown on head. The thrifty son looks over with compressed lips the stack of bills that every day grows higher. When the clergy have said their last word, when the guns have fired their parting salute, he sells his father's jewelry to pay the debts, and breaks up the Court.

He is King, and now the old wasteful order shall vanish forever. . . . No more huge fancy-smelling and verminous wigs, perfumed symbol of Bourbon decadence! . . . No more hundred Swiss Guards with fortunes in silk and velvet and gold on

their backs! . . . No more ornamental flunkeys doing nothing but air themselves in anterooms and on staircases! . . . Throughout his kingdom order, efficiency, thrift. Money, and plenty of it, in the treasury, a well-equipped, well-drilled army for defense.

Frederick I was a king only in title. Frederick William I will be one in fact. No ruler, thinks the vigorous young King of twenty-four, ever set his successor a worse example than the father just buried dutifully with such expense and ostentation —and none a better one than he will himself be to his own son and heir.

V

Frederick has survived the hard and heavy gold crown, the weighty cloth-of-silver robe, concussion of nearby cannon volleys and other christening sundries, thought by some to have killed the two previous little princes—he is also passing successfully through another ordeal. Seven months after his birth the failing old grandfather writes to the Electress Sophia of Hanover—

"Your Electoral Serenity will doubtless rejoice with us that the little Prince Fritz has just got his sixth tooth without the slightest difficulty. In this fact that his brothers died of teething while he is getting along without any trouble may be clearly traced the workings of predestination."

Would fate have arranged to have him both born and christened in the Coronation month only to let him die of teething later?

But he is a delicate child. During these early uncertain years the King makes an affectionate father. The frequent periods of ill-health which give Madame de Roucoulles, the nurse, so much anxiety worry Frederick William also. But beer-soup,

and an active outdoor life, he reflects, cannot fail later on to remedy them.

He plays floor-games with his Fritz. One day, surprised by a general down on his hands and knees with the little Prince-Royal, and feeling his position to contradict somewhat the Spartan training he so often tells his informal Tobacco-Parliament he means to give the heir, he growls by way of excuse that at times — "fathers must be children with their children."

Then, as time passes and Frederick remains puny and sickly, the father's mood changes.

VI

By now his reforms are in full swing. The army is bigger, there is certainly more gold stored away in the palace cellars than there was five years ago, when Fritz was born. The war with Sweden — the one brief war waged by Frederick William during his entire reign — has added Stettin to the kingdom.

Big French wigs are seldom paraded on the streets of Berlin or Potsdam after 1714. The King has placed a heavy tax on them, and wherever he sees one abroad he snatches it off the head of the wearer to look inside for the government stamp showing that this tax has been paid. Prussian officers wearing their hair down their backs in the simple military pigtail he has made the fashion, are becoming increasingly numerous. The Prussian recruiting sergeant, lynx-eyed to pick up tall men for the Potsdam Guards, is already a byword in Europe.

The King of Prussia himself has put on weight. He is stouter, his face is redder — he drinks more than he used to — he flares up into more violent fits of temper. — "Who are you?" this authoritative German monarch may greet the innocent stranger wandering idly about his capital, sometimes lifting

a foot or making a pass at the foreigner with his rattan cane while awaiting an answer.

He cannot stand being contradicted. *Nicht raisonieren!*—"No back-talk!"—this is the fundamental maxim for Prussians that he does his best to drive home with cane and toe.

But in this ailing child is not his desire for an heir who will be a robust duplicate of himself being thwarted? Frederick William, though too devout to challenge outright the wisdom of a Providence that sends him three sturdy daughters and a son who is a weakling, is filled with dark rage at such incomprehensible opposition.

Of what use indeed all these reforms—this building up, this strengthening of Prussia—if when he dies the country falls into the hands of a ruler soft and effeminate as Frederick I? He wants to be succeeded by a Hohenzollern hard, healthy and honest like himself—a soldier-monarch willing and able, if necessary, to protect the kingdom on the battlefield.

In this year of 1717, Frederick being five years old, and his father's affection definitely turning to dislike, in faraway Vienna the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire momentarily expects to have his own hopes for a fine heir realized. . . . But the child born is a girl. . . . It is christened Maria Theresa.

VII

Sophia Dorothea—the young Princess-Royal for whom the churchbells of Berlin clanged so vigorously that midwinter morning in the Coronation month, for whom the cannon on the ramparts roared so loudly—what part did she play in the life of her son?

Frederick's mother was too busy bearing eleven other children to give him much attention. One baby after another, tight lacing and incompatibility of temperament with her husband,

ruined her health and made her a neurotic. She too had a determined will — was wrapped up in the ambition of making good marriages for her children — but where the husband raised his voice to a bellow and struck out when opposed, the wife went into hysterics.

She loathed everything about her husband's way of living. The niggardly way in which he watched over every detail of the palace expenditures — his insistence upon eating outdoors, no matter what the weather — the wretched allowance he made her as Queen — his manners, so uncouth that she blushed for him before strangers: the vast beery belches, the huge unroyal guffaws, his flatulence which he never allowed to discomfort him — the rough pig-hunts so different from the chase as practised by the Bourbons — the mean little pigtail he has substituted for the great French peruke — his hard wooden chairs that he prefers to the dainty stuffed furniture made in Paris — the inelegant way in which one night, stooping over too suddenly, he bursts his breeches at a ball.

Playing tocadille with her ladies in a room with every window closed, the stout Hanoverian princess sighs. . . . Where is the grand life of a Queen she dreamed of once? . . . The bowing chamberlains and gilded carriages — the great court ceremonies and balls — all that pomp and grandeur of the Bourbons and Hapsburgs which her worthy stepfather had tried so hard to introduce into barbarous Brandenburg! She, married to a man who stints wood for the fireplaces and counts the candles! She, wife of a King who might easily be mistaken for a drill-sergeant!

Through the closed windows comes the subdued rattle of musketry. How she hates the sound — and the sight of those longlegged grenadiers of his being marched back and forth on the Schloss-platz! Drill, drill, drill — does he ever think of anything else?

And uncouth monarchs like himself are the only ones he admires. Not the refined Bourbons but such people as illiterate Charles of Sweden, killed in battle a little while ago, and now the Asiatic potentate, Peter of Russia. Truly the Czar is a savage! Will she ever forget his recent visit to Berlin? The brown little woman, so covered with decorations and gewgaws that she looked like a gypsy, that was his wife—a common harlot he had picked up somewhere and married! And all those other flatnosed Russian women who flocked around him smiling . . . trying always to catch his eye . . . each with a baby in her arms and so quick and pleased to answer should anyone show curiosity, "Yes, the Czar did me the honor"—what an outrage upon decency!

No, she cannot say that she admires the Czar. A king's intrigues should be conducted in the grand manner of a Louis XIV. The Russian barbarian had an odious habit of standing with his arms around the necks of two of his wife's ladies, his hands fumbling with their breasts as he talked of State matters with his ministers—and one day did she not see him with her own eyes snatch up a woman, and carrying her off in his powerful arms no further than an adjoining room where there was a couch, throw her down upon this and without returning to close the door. . . . Such behavior, with the door open, and everybody straining their ears to listen, could it be called delicate? But her husband, though not approving of this license with women the Czar allows himself, nevertheless admires him for his great physical strength, his exploits as a soldier, the interest he takes in ships, bridges, canals, and what not, and perhaps also his habit of drinking a bottle of brandy with every meal.

Frederick's mother, with her fondness for ceremony and etiquette, with her love of comfort and luxury, was pathetically miscast by fate as the wife of the coarse and strenuous King of

Prussia. Her life as Queen resolved itself into a story of propagation and scheming to escape from or to ameliorate the harsh Brandenburg environment. This scheming soon took a definite form.

For she was not only the King of Prussia's wife, she was also his cousin. When Anne of England died in 1714 Sophie Dorothea's father, Elector George of neighboring Hanover, the nearest Protestant heir, became King of England. Her brother was now heir to the throne of England. He had two children, Fred and Amelia. The first of these the Queen meant to have as husband for Wilhelmine, the second as wife for Frederick.

VIII

Pulled one way by the father, and the other by the mother, Frederick grows up. The Queen likes his gentle manners, the King frowns on them as effeminate.

He is shy, sensitive and delicate. But like Voltaire, with whom his name will be so closely linked in history, his frailty in early years is deceptive. Both live to be old men.

The King, jealous of the mother's influence, wishing the heir to absorb his own simple and manly ideas rather than her taste for fine trappings, keeps him away from her as much as possible. . . . But Frederick is afraid of his father. . . . As a boy, he seems to have felt little in common between himself and his younger brothers and sisters, so that his chief playmate became his older sister Wilhelmine.

She is three years older than Frederick, a plump lively girl who from the cradle has heard her mother say that she is to be Queen of England some day. The King's favorite child, she remembers when grown-up how miserably Frederick was treated, writing in her *Memoirs of the Margravine of Baireuth*—

"The King could not bear my brother. He never saw him without ill-treating him, and this caused in him a fear of his father and a shyness in his presence which he never got over."

Wilhelmine, less sensitive than Frederick, and being a girl with less expected of her than the heir, manages when young to get along with both her parents. The King likes her sturdiness and vitality, the Queen confides to her all her grievances and ambitions. While still a child, despite the show of innocence and lack of guile she makes in her unfinished autobiography, she appears the accomplished little intriguer reveling in secrets and plots.

But Frederick is silent and melancholy. The King, always watching for signs indicative of future manliness, sees his hopes materialize only once.

The heir, still in long clothes, has been given a drum. To Frederick William's delight he actually beats it. — Quick, send for Pesne, the Court-Painter! — Conspicuous on the palace wall there soon hangs a picture of the little drummer, his sister, Wilhelmine, beside him, and decorations in the shape of a blackamoor and a parrot added to make the composition more pleasing.

IX

Frederick's bad memory in particular irritated his father.

With a very low opinion of book-knowledge in general, Frederick William nevertheless laid great stress on the learning of things by heart. Feats of memory, gymnastics of the mind, impressed him much as did the bodily acrobatics of the jugglers and tight-rope dancers he frequently had perform for him. To be able to rattle off a prodigious series of dates and names, here was real scholarship! something truly worthwhile discovered in the otherwise rubbish-littered department of learning.

From an early age the heir to the Prussian throne had his head crammed with facts of history, emphasis to be placed always upon the achievements of the House of Hohenzollern. His tutor was instructed to make the Prince-Royal learn by heart all the events in a collection of massive tomes entitled the *Theatrum Europaeum* which covered the history of the past century.

"Would it not be better," the more modern-minded tutor inquired by letter of his royal employer, "if instead of having to study the whole of this lengthy work his Royal Highness were simply required to learn the more important events which I will gather into a synopsis for him?"

The King returned this note, with written on the margin, "*All* the events."

Charitably the tutor still protested. Need the Prince-Royal learn by heart more than the names of illustrious persons, the principal battles, sieges, and details of peace treaties?

Again the royal hand wrote on the margin, this time—

"He must learn everything by heart. It is good for his memory."

But the boy's bad memory was only seeming. Called upon to recite, to reel off facts as the King liked to hear them, Frederick forgot everything out of fear.

X

He has no memory, and he is certainly not an outdoor boy. When the King was his age he was playing rough-and-tumble games with his cousin George, twice his size, at Hanover. Frederick does not like rough play. He is still afraid of horses and the sound of cannon firing.

To harden him, and force him to grow up into a man's man like himself the King takes him entirely away from governesses

On the palace wall there soon hangs a picture of the little drummer, his sister Wilhelmine beside him

and nurses when he is seven, and turns him over to military tutors. He gives explicit directions to these upon the subjects to be taught the heir, and warns of the perils to be guarded against when he reaches adolescence. Three years later, as Frederick still remains a problem, his father draws up a lengthy memorandum detailing how his time is to be spent every minute of the day.

In this memorandum which fixes precisely the moments for rising, saying of prayers, meals, church-going, studies, etc., for weekdays and Sundays, which cautions "standing to him that he do not loiter or turn in bed when called, but briskly and at once get up," and, referring to the dressing of the hair, which is never to be powdered, commands that "while getting combed and queued he shall at the same time be eating his breakfast, so that both jobs go on at once, and all this be ended by half-past six," Frederick's father incorporated his dread that the Prussian heir may be developing the tastes of a lazy bed-warming Bourbon, who has to be helped into his shirt, puts powder on himself instead of washing, and harbors vermin in his wig.

"In undressing and dressing," he therefore concludes, "you must accustom him to get out of, and into, his clothes as fast as is humanly possible. You will also see to it that he puts on and takes off his clothes himself, without help from others, and that he be clean and neat, and not so dirty. Not so dirty — that is my last word!"

But cleanliness must not encourage waste. So the King of Prussia changes his instructions for the weekday early morning ablutions to read —

"Having said his prayers the same as on Sunday morning he shall as rapidly as possible get on his shoes and stockings, and also wash his face and hands — but not with soap."

XI

A puppet prince! Frederick sees himself as this. Of what use being born heir to a throne if it means treatment worse than that of the poorest peasant's son?

The King does in fact enjoy puppet shows. When he came to the throne he quickly did away with the French theatre and Italian opera of his more effete father. Marionettes (and Eckenberg, the Strong Man, discovered at a fair, holding out at arm's length a small cannon with a drummer-boy sitting on the end, and since made Royal Prussian Court Comedian) supply for him a far more acceptable form of entertainment. But the puppets must talk as he wants them to talk — whenever one of these little wooden men and women expresses ideas contrary to his own the King frowns on the show.

A puppet, with his father pulling the strings and talking from his mouth! . . . The brooding, subjective Prince-Royal, driven more and more into himself by the King's harsh unsympathetic treatment, resents the systematic efforts to obliterate his personality, to mould him into a duplicate of the parent who, in his eyes, has so many shortcomings.

All the things his father likes — sow-baiting, preachers, drilling, pipe-smoking, beer, fussing over trifling expenses — he must like! All the things his father hates — books, fine clothes, soft beds, powdered hair — he must hate!

Frederick is frail, he seems timid and cowardly to the King, but he has a will of his own. The father's prohibitions only bring a reaching out for the very things most sternly forbidden.

The King may make him stand sentry in a box before the palace but there are secret thoughts, even secret actions, which he cannot control. Frederick reads French books, plays the flute, borrows money, takes off (whenever his father is away)

the tight uniform he calls his shroud to put on the clothes of a young dandy, and scoffs at religion.

He even tries to learn Latin. The King, returning unexpectedly to the palace one day, finds his son closeted with a pedagogue from the town studying the language forbidden because it cannot be put to practical profit. The teacher, shrinking before his monarch's angry glare, tries to justify his presence by stammering that he is only explaining Golden Bull to his Highness. "*Schweinhund!* I'll Golden-Bull you!" shouts the furious King of Prussia, cutting at the professor's legs with his cane as he chases him from the room.

One of his instructors, of French descent, encourages him in his pursuit of the culture his father disdains. Frederick, in bleak Brandenburg where there seems to exist nothing but drilling and praying, comes to dream of that fairer country south of the Rhine whose monarchs know by instinct how to live in the grand manner.

He likes to dream also of those bygone days of the Greeks and the Romans which his father thinks it time wasted to read about as too remote from the problems facing an eighteenth century Hohenzollern king . . . The Eternal City on her Seven Hills . . . Athens . . . Mount Olympus where dwelt the gods . . . The heroes told of by Plutarch and Homer.

Do others notice, the youthful Frederick wonders sometimes, what he has himself observed, that his head inclines a little to the left as did Alexander's?

XII

Jacques Egide Duhan de Jandun, the tutor who did not approve of too much learning by heart, and who encouraged Frederick to rise above his father's prejudices, belonged to one of the Huguenot families which were invited by the Great

Elector to settle in Prussia, when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes guaranteeing freedom from persecution to the French Protestants.

His father was secretary to the Great Elector. De Jandun had received a liberal education, particularly strong in the classics and that very history of the Greeks and Romans which the King of Prussia did not want his son taught because, as he growled, "it can serve no useful purpose."

To make a living he became a tutor. During the short war with Sweden he accompanied General Dohna — whose children he was teaching — to the siege of Stralsund, and it was here that his bravery in the trenches attracted the attention of the King of Prussia.

Much as Frederick William disliked his neighbors across the Rhine he lived at a time when French was the diplomatic language of Europe and when in Prussia unfortunately most of the books and teachers were French. He could appoint General Fink von Finkenstein, the Prince-Royal's head governor, giving him as assistant another army man, Colonel von Kalkstein, but for the actual teaching he found himself forced to choose between either a born Frenchman or one of the naturalized Huguenots. He took De Jandun because he seemed to possess the qualities of a soldier as well as a pedagogue.

In the education of Frederick this Huguenot teacher of his occupied much the same position as had twenty years earlier the Abbé de Châteauneuf in that of the precocious son of the notary, Arouet. The minds of both Frederick and Voltaire were formed by men whose influence was directly contrary to that which the fathers wished.

It was from the skeptical Abbé de Châteauneuf that Voltaire learned to think for himself instead of bowing to the authority of Church and King so holy to the notary. It was from Duhan de Jandun that Frederick got his taste for the

Greek and Roman writers, for poetry and playing the flute — all things despicable and degenerate to the robust hard-drinking swine-chasing King of Prussia.

XIII

Adolescence. . . .

At sixteen Frederick has outgrown his delicate appearance. He is now a short plumpish youth, blue-eyed, with light brown hair, who to his father's taste stands and walks, talks and acts, far too much like a French fop.

The King, who has reached the age of thirty-eight, is fat and gouty. He has developed queer humors. Besides the Potsdam giants he these days drills an old bear. "Heraus!" he shouts, "Heraus!" and out the bear comes from the barracks on its hind-legs to get into line with the men. He kicks and beats on the slightest provocation. One day, driving in the country, he, for no apparent reason, raises his gun and takes a pot-shot at a miller passing peacefully along the road.

His despotism, the terrible discipline he maintains in his steadily growing army, has created a Prince-Royal's party. Young officers wait impatiently for Frederick William's death and the day when his amiable son will reign. Frederick is the center of a group of military intellectuals who write French verses, vie with each other in the manufacture of witty epigrams, discuss endlessly the latest gossip from the Paris salons, and read Voltaire.

Forbidden the society of women, he makes furtive visits in this company to the Berlin and Potsdam brothels. He gets to know of another vice also. For homosexual pleasures, never frowned upon in the golden days of Greece, and now popular in the best Parisian circles, have made their way into the Prussian regiments.

The father has tried to force his son to love him and he has failed — now his efforts to force him to be chaste prove equally futile.

A visit is made to Dresden. Here at the gay court of the King of Poland, though his father tries to keep watch on him, Frederick plunges into dissipation. It is either now, or shortly after the return to Berlin, that he contracts the venereal disease which gives him trouble for years and, improperly treated, is believed to have made him sterile.

He gets little sympathy. "When one's children are well one does not realize how much one loves them," the King declares in a letter to his friend, the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau, and he grudgingly permits Frederick to stop drilling for awhile, but as soon as the military surgeons pronounce him well again the effort to force rather than to lead into the path of virtue recommences. The Prince-Royal is compelled to visit the army hospitals that the wrecks of men lying here may inspire him with a wholesome terror at the thought of the still worse disease he might have contracted, while at the same time the King offers a reward to anyone who at any time brings him word that his son has caught syphilis.

XIV

His closest friends are two young officers, Keith and Katte. To both of them clings the suspicion of perversion. But if Frederick is ever truly homosexual, at this period of his life he takes an unquestionable interest in women also. The King banishes Keith to Wesel, a garrison town in the Prussian Rhine province.

Frederick, sent in disgrace to the hunting castle of Wusterhausen which the King knows he hates, protests innocence. So far Katte, perhaps because his father is one of the King's

favorite generals, has escaped punishment, but who can tell when the heavy royal fist will fall upon him too? Frederick writes to the King a contrite letter in which expedient dutifulness struggles to reach a compromise with the revolt in his heart.

"My dear Papa,

I have not been able to make up my mind to come to my dear Papa, partly because I have been advised not to, but mainly as I am myself afraid that I might expect an even worse reception than usual. As I fear to annoy my dear Papa in person with the following request, I shall therefore make it in writing. I beg my dear Papa to be gracious to me, and I can assure him in this connection that after careful thought my conscience finds nothing to reproach me with. But should I without knowledge or intention have done anything which may have annoyed my dear Papa, I now most respectfully ask his pardon, and I hope that my dear Papa will get over his cruel hate, of which I have been made sufficiently aware by all his actions, otherwise I could no longer bear it. I have always thought that I had a gracious father, and I should then be forced to believe the contrary. I therefore summon the greatest confidence, and hope that my dear Papa will consider what I have said and again be gracious to me. In the meantime I assure him that my days will be filled with goodwill towards him, and that even should he be unforgiving I still remain with humble and binding respect his son,

Frederick."

In every line of which letter his dear Papa reads hypocrisy and insincerity. The King, in his reply, will not even address Frederick as his son, but uses the impersonal *Er,* as though from the awful height of his position as King of Prussia speaking to some lowly peasant in one of his provinces. His answer runs—

"He (Er) is stubborn and wicked and does not love his father. For if one loves one's father one obeys him, not only when he is watching but when his back is turned. Besides he knows that I cannot abide an effeminate man, who has a shifty eye, who cannot ride or shoot, who does not wash himself properly, and who wears his hair like a coxcomb, never has it cut off neatly. I have spoken to him about all this a thousand times but all in vain, he never improves. Also he is conceited and proud, will not speak to people unless he feels like it, is neither popular nor amiable, and makes faces at people as though he were a fool, and does nothing I want him to do except when I make him. He does nothing through love, he has only one idea in his head and that is to do as he wants, nothing I say or do does any good. This is my answer."

Through love! . . . Frederick's blue eyes gleam with an ironic smile. . . . This father who tries to drill him as he drills the giant Potsdam Guards or the old bear, what cause has he ever given his son to love him?

Were there only some way of getting out of Prussia, of becoming free to lead his own life in a more civilized country until the King dies and the throne of Prussia becomes his!

XV

In 1727 George the First, the German-speaking King of England, dropped dead while on the way to his electorate of Hanover. His son, Frederick's uncle, succeeded him as George the Second.

The children, Amelia and Fred, had been growing up like their Brandenburg cousins. Frederick's mother was still anxious for the double-marriage. Indeed her whole life now centered upon it.

For awhile the King of Prussia had favored the union. This

was during the latter years of George the First's reign. The close friendship of Austria and Spain having raised fears of another Hapsburg domination of Europe, a secret defense treaty known as the Alliance of Hanover was entered into by Prussia, England and France. News of this treaty created consternation in Vienna. The Emperor, still without male children, had made Maria Theresa his heir. He anticipated trouble when the time came for her to inherit, and could not but help be alarmed at the thought that the army of his Elector of Brandenburg when called upon to come to his daughter's aid might refuse to respond. Frederick's grandfather might have put a crown on his head, but to the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire the kings of Prussia were still feudal vassals whose duty it was always to stand ready to protect imperial rights.

Shortly, therefore, after the Hanover Alliance became known a diplomatist named Seckendorf arrived in Berlin from Vienna to work on the unruly Brandenburg elector and detach him from the alliance. The eccentricities of Frederick's father being now familiar gossip in Europe, he was rightly looked upon as an easy mark for this experienced intriguer. Seckendorf humored the King's gigantomania, his passion for tall men, by seeing that no complaint ever came from the Austrian possessions when some tall tinker or carpenter was kidnapped by the Prussian recruiting agents, and from time to time saw to it that some were sent along as presents. On the contrary, George the Second was beginning to resent strongly his nephew's equally highhanded methods in Hanover. An Austrian pension given to General Grumbkow, a close friend of Frederick William's, further helped the imperial cause. A year and a half after going into the Hanover Alliance the King of Prussia was signing with the Emperor the secret Treaty of Wusterhausen.

But determined as Austria was to keep the two Protestant kingdoms of Prussia and England apart, the Queen was equally determined to have her English marriages. She had seen her husband grow each year more intolerant, more set on having his own way in everything. She feared — and as events proved, rightly — that his desire to dominate his children until the day of his death might lead him to marry Frederick and Wilhelmine into the families of insignificant German princes rather than risk alliance with any powerful royal house. . . . But to give up her splendid ambition of becoming mother-in-law to the future King of England because of the intrigues of a wretch like Baron Seckendorf, who snuffled rather than talked, and a traitor like unctuous Grumbkow! . . . Never would she do it! . . . As long as there was breath in her body she meant to fight to undermine their influence with her eccentric husband, and in the end, victorious, see her matrimonial ambitions realized.

XVI

Insults, humiliations, and now blows! Frederick, as his father takes to kicking and cuffing him without provocation, to throwing plates at his head at the dinner table, makes definite plans for running away. There is little doubt in his mind as to what is the trouble — the King, long unbalanced, will soon be completely insane.

Who can doubt it from his actions? He has scaled a living fish and tried to make guests eat it. He imagines himself an Old Testament prophet. He devours enormous messes of oysters and cabbage, washed down with beer, and then rushes at the cook with his sword because his stomach feels uncomfortable. He falls on a farmer he finds sleeping in a sunny woodland nook and gives him a sound thrashing.

The Prince-Royal is not alone in his estimate of the King of Prussia's mental state. His roomful of canes, his readiness to lift hand or foot at a moment's notice, his frequent shouts of "I will chastise you in an exemplary manner!", his knocking the teeth out of the mouths of some judges who hand down verdicts which displease him, alarm everybody. "Saving the respect due to the Crown," writes a spectator of the extraordinary scenes daily transacted at the Prussian court, "he can only be compared to a madman with a razor in his hand."

He beats his children, the soldiers, servants, anyone indeed who happens to be passing by and comes within reach. So far he has failed to raise his hand or his foot only to the Queen, the officers of his army, and ministers. But then at a banquet to the French ambassador he has said publicly, "If I were to thrash one of my ministers, would you write about it to France?"—"I trust that your Majesty will not put my discretion to such a test," Rottenburg, the ambassador addressed, replies diplomatically.—Fearful of their safety from this moment on, the foreign ministers write to their respective governments suggesting some kind of protection.

"Spring is a bad time of year for him," notes the French ambassador in his diary, for use when in later years he will perhaps write an account of his experiences at the court of this outlandish German monarch. "He will go out alone on horseback, and while riding quietly along seems to be seized by either a divine inspiration or a desire to be somewhere else, for with a blood-curdling yell he suddenly gallops off madly."

Behavior queer but by no means inexplicable. The King both eats and drinks to excess. He smokes sometimes as much as thirty pipes of strong tobacco a day. He has fallen off his horse and been kicked on the head a number of times. With strong promiscuous instincts he remains on religious principles true to his wife, except for one occasion when he tries

unsuccessfully to rape one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting on the backstairs of the palace. Full-blooded, apoplectic, his stomach in a state of constant turmoil, his head always heated by drinking, flagellation and sadism supply him with an outlet for his otherwise stifled passions.

Withal he is shrewd. He makes his officers recruit for him at their own expense. He dines away from home — with the foreign ambassadors by choice — as often as he can, to cut down the palace bills. He jeers at all philosophy as *windmacherei* — wind manufacture — and ignores the celebrated Wolff, disciple of Leibnitz, now teaching at Halle, until some enemies of the philosopher explaining to him that by Wolff's theory of predestination any one of the Potsdam giants might desert with a clear conscience if he only came to the conclusion that he had been *predestined* to do so, he very quickly chases Wolff out of Prussia. To a preacher who assures him that as a good Christian, the King of Prussia, if cuffed on one ear would immediately turn the other, he answers, "Not I, not I, that would not suit me at all!" and when his revenues seem to be falling off bangs his beer-mug on the table and shouts "I do not intend to receive accounts and papers instead of money!"

Shrewd — shrewd — ! Frederick William is administering his kingdom wisely, he is the first European monarch to abandon the recruiting system in favor of compulsory military service, and he now has an army of nearly a hundred thousand men.

Frederick sees only the tyrannical father. He plans escape to France, from there to England if the King tries to have him brought back. Though he has really no intention of committing suicide he frequently hints at this also to his mother and sister that they may testify to his state of desperation brought about by the King's brutality. After a particularly

bad thrashing one day he sends a note to the Queen, "My patience is at an end. I have too much honor to endure such treatment, and am determined to put an end to it one way or another."

One way or another. By this he definitely means flight. He does not know that the King, who has guessed his intention of running away, and sees here an opportunity of gaining ends of his own, is deliberately goading him on to make the attempt.

XVII

Against the despotism of the father the son rebels, unconscious that the germ of that same wilfulness is contained in his own character. But it is necessarily held down as yet to dissimulation, for Frederick has not come into power.

His eighteenth birthday had just passed when the King took him again to Dresden. By now the King of Prussia had a strong persecution complex. He had been brought by Seckendorf and Grumbkow to believe that all foreign nations except Austria, with England at the head, were bent on his destruction. Worse still, since forty of his big grenadiers, driven to a frenzy by the never-ending drills and beatings, beatings and drills, were caught hatching a plot to set the palace on fire and burn him in his bed, he suspected treason in the army. If Frederick tried to escape from Saxony as he hoped, some of the licentious Prussian officers of the younger generation would undoubtedly be his confederates — by making a few terrible examples could he not strike terror into the revolutionists?

Frederick said goodbye to his mother and sister. He would be leaving Berlin shortly after dawn in the morning as the King liked to make early starts. But later that same night a French gentleman came knocking at the door of Wilhelmine's apartment. He pushed his way past the maid — Wilhelmine,

half-undressed, hid screaming behind a screen. Then the Frenchman spoke and she recognized her brother.

Frederick smiled. The astonishment in her eyes flattered his vanity. This, his pleased expression said to her, is the way I would always look if I were not compelled by our father to wear the inelegant Prussian uniforms with their tight-fitting skimpy coats which show too much of the behind. His wig, his fine lace ruffles, the handsome crimson roquelaure — yes, he knew he looked well in them.

He told Wilhelmine he meant to fly secretly from Dresden to England, and that here was the costume he would wear as he travelled incognito. Once in safety he intended to try his best to have his favorite sister join him, if she wanted to come. Let them stay in this barbarous kingdom of their father's much longer and it would swallow them up — they would degenerate until he became as bad as the ignorant old generals unable to read and write, while she ended her days one of those ungainly German princesses that a French Marquise was ashamed to invite into her drawing room.

Here was news which dismayed Wilhelmine. For her mother was still intriguing to bring off the English marriages, and she saw her chance of being Queen of England vanish forever with Frederick once taking this step that would so infuriate the King.

Besides, as she listened to him unfold more details of his plan, she saw how certain it was to fail. Keith was to desert from Wesel, and join him at the Hague, Katte would make the wild ride for freedom with his prince. . . . Already a dangerous correspondence is going on! . . . She trembled at the thought of much having been confided to these two dissolute friends, neither of whom she knew could keep his mouth closed after a few drinks. She persuaded Frederick to postpone making the attempt until in a few

weeks the Queen received some very important news from England.

When Frederick was gone she told the Queen of this interview. Frederick's mother, only too familiar with her husband's temper, likewise saw her plans crashing to ruin. Though the Prince-Royal had promised Wilhelmine not to make the attempt, she still worried. A messenger came to the King with news that his wife was dying.

Frederick William always held suspect these sudden illnesses of his wife. But this time, when he arrived at her bedside, she at first convinced him. His choleric temperament supercharged with alcohol and emotion found relief in fit of remorse. He begged her forgiveness humbly for the unhappy life he had led her. But he was instantly put on his guard when he heard her saying something about having only one last wish — and that was to see him reconciled with Wilhelmine and Frederick before she passed on into a better world.

He sent for Wilhelmine. She fell at his feet, and promised obedience. He picked her up and kissed her. Then he sent for Frederick and told him that he forgave him everything on his mother's account — after her death, united by this common sorrow, there would never be anything but love between them.

In three days the Queen was well again.

"My brother," remembered Wilhelmine, "then began to receive his usual allowance of canings and cuffs."

XVIII

This English-marriage scheme of his mother's — why persist in it further? The King will never consent, and Frederick well knows why.

"He may pretend to have other reasons," he says bitterly to the Englishman Hotham, "but the *real* one is that he wants to keep me always in an inferior position, so that he can devil me all his life whenever the spirit moves him."

Hotham is the special envoy from England the Queen has been waiting for. On him and a certain letter she pins her hopes of success.

Politically, despite Austria's intriguing to push them apart, the Kings of Prussia and England know that an alliance would be mutually profitable. George's Hanover is surely more secure in troubled Europe with a friendly Prussian army just across the border, Frederick William, a staunch Protestant, cannot help but secretly favor the island.

But these cousins, who fought together as boys, now dislike each other as men. George calls Frederick's father a corporal, Frederick's father calls the King of England a "jackpudding." On the subject of Frederick William's mania for giants the two Kings have almost come to war. In resprisal for ten Hanoverian tall men kidnapped for the Potsdam Guard ten Prussian recruiting sergeants were arrested in Hanover. Frederick William immediately ordered the hay cut in some meadows on the frontier, the ownership of which had for some time been disputed between him and George. While Frederick William's peasants were eating their dinner after cutting the hay, George's slipped over and gathered in the crop.

The King's political reasons for opposing the marriages are usually hidden by threats and violent outbursts of temper whenever the subject is mentioned. He actually would like Wilhelmine to marry the Prince of Wales as this is a good match. But he does not want an expensive English princess for daughter-in-law, still less likes the thought of her as Queen when Frederick succeeds him.

"She will never accustom herself to the simplicity and

economy that are necessary in Prussia," he says. "On her account the army will have to be reduced, and the royal household and the State will start to walk backwards like crabs."

Privately, the King of Prussia derives more than a little satisfaction from all this fuss of which he is the center.

"All the most important Powers run after me, and flatter me one against the other as if I were a bride," he declares in a very self-satisfied way. "They know that a prince with a standing army of a hundred thousand men, and twenty-five millions of crowns to set it going with, is worth cultivating!"

Frederick's spirit has by no means been broken by his ill-treatment. He is aware that his own amiability gains by contrast with the temper of his father. Further he has the consolation of not being the only sufferer. "There is an enormous amount of discontent abroad," Rottenburg writes home. "Everything looks as if a revolution would break out before long. The times are ripe for it." And already he has power of a sort. Whether or not there does come an uprising which will depose his insane father and set him on the throne, he is always the heir. Foreign ministers court his friendship. Families of German princesses to whom the King has talked of marrying him evade the honor with excuses because fearful of the Prince-Royal's revenge later. Who can forget that that army of a hundred thousand men, those twenty-five millions of crowns, may any day be his?

But he is young and therefore impatient. "The history of the Greeks and Romans can serve no useful purpose," said his practical father, when he emphasized the far greater importance of the history of the House of Brandenburg. Frederick craves in life the same mystery, excitement, and glamour which he finds in the forbidden Classics. He hates everything Prussian, and as the Grand Nation of modern times turns to everything French. He wants to travel, to see life abroad while

he is still young, to meet Voltaires and Newtons in countries where monarchs are more civilized than his own father, whose way of encouraging the Letters and Sciences is to keep as court fools a physicist and a philosopher, into the bed of one of whom he puts bear-cubs while the other he commands to write a treatise on hobgoblins.

To humor his mother and Wilhelmine he will stay until Hotham delivers the letters, but not an hour longer!

XIX

Sir Charles Hotham, the Yorkshire baronet sent over as envoy extraordinary in the matter of the marriages, was a sedate Englishman who laid considerable stress upon dignity in deportment.

His mission was not an easy one. His instructions were to secure the hand of the Prince-Royal of Prussia for the Princess Amelia, but to demur at a marriage of the Prince of Wales with Wilhelmine. The Court of St. James like Berlin was willing to have one of its children share a foreign throne but by no means so anxious to share its own. For an English princess Frederick was undoubtedly a good match, but better could surely be done for the heir to England and Hanover than Wilhelmine.

Sir Charles, at the beginning, seemed to be eminently successful. But the surface turmoil of Frederick's apparently so outspoken father hid deep waters. The very night that he was drinking confusion to the Emperor and seeming to wholly agree with the English proposals he was scheming with Grumbkow how to outwit the envoy. He knew his favorite general took bribes from Austria but this curious monarch who always followed his own line of reasoning did not care. "I am well aware," he said once, referring to others in French

pay, "that many of my people have been gained over by France. If France is foolish enough to offer them pensions they have nothing to do but to accept them. The money will stay in the country, and their children will spend it here." The money will stay in the country — what more is there to be said? He likes Grumbkow personally, knows him to be as thrifty as himself, and does not blame him for picking up what he can on the side.

Grumbkow's treachery was a small matter to him compared with his son's crime. For Seckendorf had communicated to him the discovery that Frederick had been corresponding secretly with England, complaining doubtless of his ill-treatment and trying to stir up trouble generally. This for the King amounted to little less than high treason. . . . He brooded on the thought of England helping Frederick to usurp the throne. . . . He saw his army revolting, Hanoverian troops marching to join the rebels, and himself thrown into a dungeon while his depraved son seized power. . . . He had still darker imaginings — he was convinced Frederick intended a yet greater crime. These fears, if they seemed folly to Rottenburg and the other ministers, were very real to the King. He jumped out of bed at night sometimes and woke the Queen telling her that "he had had such horrible ideas and dreams he could not sleep, and that he did not know where to go because people were pursuing him with intent to murder him."

Hotham, seeing his attitude change, prepared to play his highest card. This was a letter written by Grumbkow which only proved what the King already knew — that the general's zeal in opposing the plans of England came not from that patriotic attachment to Prussia and the House of Hohenzollern which he professed, but from greed for Austrian gold.

The King took the letter, dashed it on the floor, and raised his foot to kick Sir Charles.

XX

This gesture of the ever-ready royal Prussian foot towards the dignified British backside ended all hope of any marriages, double or single, with England. Outraged Sir Charles, all the Queen's entreaties notwithstanding, quits Berlin the following day.

The King frankly admits his temper got the better of him. "I was in a bad humor," he explains, "and when that happens I must relieve my feelings."

When he hears Sir Charles is leaving to render an immediate account to his court of "this most surprising circumstance," he goes so far as to send a messenger with an apology, and also an invitation to dinner.

But he really cannot understand why Hotham should take so seriously an action so common with him that he has come to look upon it as a mere pleasantry. "The English are very touchy," he says, when Sir Charles insists on leaving.

He feels, at bottom, that the English envoy was to blame for meddling in what did not concern him — the King of Prussia's relationship with his ministers. But his spleen at Sir Charles's departure can always be taken out on Frederick. All around him the King of Prussia is now seeing invisible traitors and he wants to bring the conspiracy to a head. "If my father had treated me this way I would have blown my brains out," he taunts Frederick after cuffing his ears and rapping him on the head with the hard end of his cane before a group of foreign officers. "But *this* fellow will stand for anything."

Frederick, implored by the women still to have patience, pushes them angrily aside —

"It is time to think of myself," he declares, and repeats this obstinately to all their arguments.

He is tired of all these underhand intrigues and determined to take the only obvious and direct course to freedom—flight.

The Prince-Royal, however, is more anxious to leave Prussia than foreign countries are to have him. In both France and England he is pitied, but the hundred thousand soldiers of a furious father must be taken into consideration.

"Whithersoever the Prince goes," one diplomat sums up the situation, "his presence would certainly be very embarrassing."

XXI

Frederick's attempt to escape, the consequences of which will gain him such notoriety throughout Europe, has from the outset no chance of success. His father, watchful behind a mask of ignorance, sees every step of the plan.

As a matter of fact not much astuteness on the part of the King is necessary. Both Katte and Frederick, as Wilhelmine feared, do a great deal of talking. Many months before the attempt the French ambassador is writing to Versailles, "I have reason to believe that he is thinking of making his escape." Others are equally in on the secret. Katte, warned of the risk he runs in being a confederate, boasts openly of the Prince-Royal's friendship for him and sets no bounds on Frederick's gratitude when he becomes king. He like Frederick is inclined to underestimate the King's will or even power to do him real harm, if caught. "What can happen to me?" he asks. "The Prince-Royal will always protect me." To Keith at Wesel letters are constantly on the road.

After a number of failures, due to the polite but firm refusal of friends or relatives to supply him with horses, the attempt is finally made one morning at dawn from a little village near Stuttgart where the King and Frederick are staying overnight

on a trip through Germany. In the very act of riding away Frederick is arrested.

The three officers — General Buddenbrock, Colonels Rochow and Waldow — ordered to watch his every movement say nothing, however, to the King, satisfied with having prevented the attempt. It is a page, Keith's younger brother, taken by Frederick into his confidence, who tells.

The father prefers to wait until more evidence accumulates before confronting the son with the crime. At the same time he takes care to let his officers know that he disapproves of their desire to shield the Prince-Royal. Calling Rochow to his side, appropriately just after a church service, when the colonel should be in a receptive state of mind, he tells him,

"Fritz has tried to desert. I am surprised that nothing has been said to me about it. You, Rochow, shall answer to me with your head, your neck, and your throat, if he escapes before we get back to Berlin. I have not time to say more now."

The royal party nears the Rhine. Mannheim they find full of French officers from the fortress of Landau across the river. These are here only from curiosity to see in the flesh the much-talked-about Prussian despot as he passes through, but the King's suspicious eyes immediately discern a more sinister purpose — they have come by prearrangement to meet Frederick and help him away. Exulting in the knowledge that the attempt has failed, it becomes increasingly difficult for him to keep his triumph to himself. Frederick is travelling in a separate carriage, and when he arrives in the evening the King cannot help jeering —

"What, you still here? I thought you were long ago in Paris."

Frederick still has hopes of escaping. From Frankfort the trip is down the Rhine to Wesel, and in Wesel Keith waits. Katte, so far unable to leave Berlin, as he cannot get a furlough, may any moment arrive. He thinks his father suspects, without

having any proofs. To appear frank and open he admits the thought while repudiating the act.

"Had I *wanted* to," he replies boldly, "I could certainly have been in France by now."

He does not know that it was by the King's order Katte was refused his furlough. He does not know that this very night the King is reading his latest indiscreet letter to Berlin in which all the details of the plan lie revealed — how Katte is to come to the Hague, how he is there to ask for a *Count d'Alberville* (a name taken by Frederick from a romance), how he and Katte and Keith in their rôle of three young adventurous Frenchmen will then set forth on their travels, — also not to forget to bring all the money he can lay his hands on, and to try to arrange to have the library (the several thousand forbidden books Frederick has hidden in a private house near the Berlin palace) shipped out of Prussia.

But a few days later he is sending off to both of his friends the same desperate message —

"Sauvez-vous, tout est decouvert!" [1]

XXII

The explosive King of Prussia had been unable to hold in his secret. Frederick William's pathological delight in making scenes, the joy he took in the sound of his own voice bellowing, the flying out of his fists and feet in every direction, mastered him finally at Frankfort. The monarch, whose whole life was one of creation and conservation, who wasted nothing and hoarded everything, who built up with infinite pains the finest war-machine in Europe but shrank always from using it — this careful, cautious ruler found it necessary to release in

[1] Fly! All is discovered!

blows and kicks the craving for destruction which, along with the desire to create, lurks at the bottom of all animal nature.

After drinking heavily in the town he boarded the royal yacht bent upon mischief. Frederick had already by his orders been brought here. The King rushed up to his son, shouted, cursed, shook his fists in his face, pulled his hair, nose and ears, all the while demanding in a voice scarcely articulate a full and complete confession. . . . Frederick refused to confess. . . . Even beneath the blows he disliked most — the rapping of his head with the hard-topped cane — he remained silent.

The King thereupon drew his sword.

Officers hurriedly threw themselves between father and son. — In a moment of folly did his Majesty intend committing a crime he would regret all his life? — But Frederick's father had no intention of doing more than make the scene as terrible and awe-inspiring as possible, something that would live as a warning in the memory of the spectators to their dying days. Finding it effective, he repeated it at Wesel, where he found that the conspirator Keith had escaped into Holland, and where Frederick still refused to give him the desired facts.

Roaring drunk, but hard-headed as the cane Frederick so loathed, the King of Prussia ramped around, expending a vast amount of energy pushing the big generals aside as fast as they got between him and the Prince-Royal — snorting furious indifference at the pleadings of old Buddenbrock when he pleaded solemnly, "This deed, your Majesty, will ring through Europe!" — hurling curses and yells to stand out of the way to the commandant of the fortress when he hears him mumbling something to the effect of "doing as you will with the grey hairs of a faithful old soldier, but spare your son, the Prince-Royal!" — apparently always on the point of snatching his sword-arm away from the grasp of the officers, but actually

doing nothing beyond making a great deal of noise and distributing a few bruises. For this father, obvious as the son thinks him, can also act a part. He has been found, when it suited his policy, with a rope around his neck, as though on the point of strangling himself, and on another occasion, equally to enjoy the universal amazement and confusion, even allowed himself the colossal joke of announcing that he intended to abdicate in favor of Frederick!

Permitting himself to be calmed finally, he orders the Prince-Royal's uniform and sword to be taken from him. After changing his mind several times about the safest place of confinement he decides at last upon the fortress of Kustrin as Frederick's prison. But he gives minute directions to the escort never in crossing Germany to make stops in the country except at places "where there are no hedges or bushes, and one can see plainly all around," and to be sure to take a route which does not cross Hanover. He himself still has business out of Prussia, but he will be back as soon as he can to take charge.

XXIII

What are Frederick's reactions to all this uproar?

In the first place he thinks it ludicrous exaggeration on the part of his father to call him such names as "rebel" and "deserter," and to define his attempt to leave the royal party at Steinfurt as a "crime."

Then he cannot believe he is in any real danger. Accustomed to view his father as a mean domestic tyrant and nothing more, it is impossible for him now to connect him with any genuine tragedy. Besides when the King speaks of a court-martial, talks about "condemning him to death," does he not forget something? As his father's son, even as heir to the throne of Prussia, he may be answerable to the King, but as a prince

of the Empire he lies beyond the tyrant's jurisdiction. But he is worried somewhat about Katte, who less fortunate than Keith has been arrested in Berlin.

Knowing that the eyes of the world have been on him since the terrible scenes at Frankfort and Wesel, that everything he says and does will pass beyond the boundaries of Prussia and be discussed in France and England, perhaps even be incorporated into a stirring epic poem by that great genius and champion of liberty he so much admires — Voltaire — Frederick takes his confinement lightly and talks for publicity. The prison fare, he declares, is no worse than he is used to having in the royal palaces — his cell may be small but it is certainly no bleaker in appearance than the dismal rooms at Wusterhausen — his father has done him a kindness in taking his uniform and sword away. What he does miss are pen-and-ink and his flute. With these and books allowed him he would have no complaint. All his life has been a struggle for peace and quiet, a search for some refuge from his father's persecutions, and here in the thick walls of this old fortress he at last has found it. — "Is that all? Is there anything else you wish to know?" he keeps asking the King's inquisitors politely, having told them nothing but only wasted their time in irrelevant chatter, and the inquisitors notice that he is very *lustig und fröhlich.*

Frederick is posing partly — but not altogether. The hated routine of drill, all the daily badgering and humiliation, have been interrupted by an event at least exciting. He has failed to escape — but he has succeeded in attracting a great deal of attention. He did not cry out beneath the King's blows, he did not wince when that hated hand dropped the cane and seized the sword, so he has shown both dignity and courage — a contempt for danger indeed which would surely not discredit one of those debonair French noblemen he so admires who in

the thick of battle stop to take snuff elegantly from a jewelled box.

Of the two it is he who has acted the part of king—his father has behaved like a drunken porter. And though the Kustrin officials must obey the King's orders he can feel their sympathy. One smuggles him extra candles, another gets him writing materials. It thrills him to remember that Voltaire too was imprisoned in his youth, and reveling in the discovery of this experience they now share in common he only wishes he could repeat in Kustrin the immortal cantos of the *Henriade* that the Frenchman composed in the Bastille.

The Prussian fortress itself does actually please him for awhile. Kustrin stands on the bank of the Oder. With no frenzied father at his elbow he can ponder at his ease upon the various French forms of verse, or give himself up to reveries of the exploits of ancient heroes, while resting his eyes on the shining water which flows down into Brandenburg from the fertile Austrian province of Silesia.

XXIV

The King, his business on the Rhine finished, returned to Prussia. Intense activity marked his actions during these two months that Frederick waited in prison. He confiscated the hidden library, thought at first of making a bonfire of all the books, then ordered the crowned "F" to be removed from the binding, and the volumes to be sent to Hamburg where the Prussian resident was to sell them "for the best price obtainable." He exiled Frederick's librarian, also the tutor Duhan de Jandun who apparently had guided the Prince-Royal in his selection of French and Classic authors, to Memel, far off in cold East Prussia. He drove away from Berlin the

Saxon minister Suhm because he read philosophy, played the flute, and had generally in the King's opinion helped to lead his son away. He heavily fined all people discovered to have lent the Prince-Royal money. To unearth more about England's connection with the plot he manhandled for the first time both the Queen and Wilhelmine. He commanded a court-martial to sit and try Frederick, Katte and Keith for desertion.

Amid this welter of business and investigation which daily disclosed either some new disobedience on the part of Frederick or the baseness of subjects already catering to "the future sun," the King had one moment of grim satisfaction. During his cross-questioning of the librarian, a miserable beadle who had not dared refuse the job of taking care of Frederick's books, it did not take him long to ask the question — how much had the Prince-Royal paid him a week?

"Twenty sols,"[2] replied the beadle.

"Well, that is not too much," said the thrifty King of Prussia, pleased that in this instance at least his son had shown sense.

Ginckel, the Dutch minister, a favorite of the King's, is horrified at the nature of the threats made by his Majesty as they sit together sucking on their long clay pipes. He dare not repeat in detail what he is told — the "clean sweep of heads," including the Queen's, Wilhelmine's, and Frederick's, in fact all who have had any connection with the "foreign plot," which the King intends to make — but he does write to Holland that "he would never have believed it possible for any human being to form such impious and execrable designs. If the King of Prussia persists in these feelings, which we must hope God will not allow, we shall witness the most impious and bloody scenes that have ever been known since the beginning of the world."

[2] About fifteen cents.

The King works himself into fits of rage where he foams at the mouth. He drinks all night, sweeps beer mugs and pipes from the table in paroxysms of fury, hurls to the floor the pans of smouldering peat used for pipe-lighting. When he does go to bed he gets up at unexpected moments, awakening the whole palace with his shouts, oaths, and declarations that the rooms are full of hidden assassins. He swears that England has already an army in motion against him, and that only wholesale executions can stem the revolution on the verge of breaking out among his troops.

In all this confusion there is a great deal of smoke but there is also fire. On the twenty-seventh of October the court-martial hands down its decisions — for the runaway Keith hanging in effigy at Wesel, for Katte, who had intended to desert but had not actually done so, life-imprisonment, and for the Prince-Royal, despite the King's command that he be tried likewise simply as an officer in the Prussian army, its own incompetence to pass judgment. The King immediately throws aside the sentence imposed on Katte, substituting death for imprisonment. On the third of October Katte is taken to Kustrin and beheaded.

XXV

The blow has fallen, so swiftly, so terribly, that Frederick, only a moment before *lustig und fröhlich,* gaily writing French verses, is stunned.

Whether or not he is forced to stand and witness the actual execution of his friend, it is on record that he does see and talk with Katte before his death, does beg his forgiveness from a window of the fortress as the death procession passes, does receive in answer from the light-hearted young officer (who until the actual raising of the headsman's axe believed the

King only intended to frighten him, and that at the last moment his life would be spared) the answer that "Death is sweet for a prince I love so well!"

Katte, for all his protestations that he "submitted himself humbly to the will of Providence and the King," was clinging desperately to life. He believed that a long letter of repentance addressed to his father, and sure to be shown the King, would help him after a direct appeal had failed. The King's only comment upon this letter, and a petition for mercy sent him by General Katte, was the laconic one — "His son is a scoundrel, mine too, we can neither of us help it."

Katte then set to work feverishly composing a farewell advice which Müller, the friendly chaplain, was to deliver after his death to Frederick — in this he gave many quotations from the Bible, reminded Frederick that he himself had from the beginning been against the flight project, and exhorted the Prince-Royal with his dying breath in the future to obey his father in everything, and in particular to renounce that theory of predestination so offensive to the King. This likewise did no good.

Nothing that the young captain might say or promise could make the King forget that here was a man who was not only an officer in the Prussian army but also an officer in the royal bodyguard and therefore sworn to special fidelity — yet who instead of immediately revealing the Prince-Royal's plot had allowed himself to be drawn into it. The pathetic implication that if allowed to live Katte from now on would be a good rather than a bad influence in the life of the heir failed to move him. He did not need others to show his son the path to rectitude and virtue — he had always been very well able to do that himself.

Appeals of father, grandfather and friends alike did no good.

Frederick William said he was not in a position to pardon. Already he had shown too much clemency — Prussian law (as he had reminded the court-martial in the letter changing its verdict) prescribed tearing with hot pincers and hanging for Katte's crime of high treason, it was only out of feeling for his family that he had reduced the penalty.

In this letter to the court-martial the King had allowed himself one expression of grim humor. "His majesty," he wrote, "went to school in his youth also, and there he learned the Latin proverb — *Fiat Justitia et pereat mundus!* In informing Katte of his sentence, the council will tell him that it grieves his Majesty, but that it is better he should die than that justice should perish from the world." The petitions for mercy he cuts short finally with — "Let nobody meddle any further in this business without my express command."

Shut up in Kustrin after Katte's execution Frederick was fearful for his own life. Foreign courts were also convinced that the mad King of Prussia intended to murder his son. The Emperor sent a letter urging him to be merciful. But the King intended no further bloodshed.

His aim of striking terror by "making Katte's death an example and warning to others" was achieved. Is the execution being severely criticized abroad — do France and England think him a tyrant? He only exclaims, "If there had been a hundred thousand such Kattes, I would have had all their heads cut off together. As long as God grants me life, I will maintain my position as despotic lord."

From the reports of the doctor and chaplain who attend Frederick during his nervous breakdown he can see that his son is thoroughly scared. Perhaps now he will abandon that senseless French habit of joking about serious matters which has led him, when being shown the sacks of gold stored away in the palace cellars for a War Chest, to say as he patted the

one bending over lowest with the weight of its coins, "Be easy, thy Redeemer liveth!"

The King now wants only a written confession of guilt and a solemn oath to obey in the future. When he gets these he orders the doors of the fortress to be opened and Frederick to be released.

Part Two

WAITING

I

IN Katte's execution Frederick's tragi-comic childhood and early youth reached its climax. Behind him now are the years when his father laid physical hands on him, pulled his hair and ears, rapped his head with the top of his cane. Subjected in the past to indignity and abuse which make of him a sort of royal Smike, he proceeds to enter a period of his life when he sees a great deal less of the King, does far more what he pleases, and obtains from his father, if grudgingly at times, treatment more appropriate to his age and rank.

How does he achieve this apparent miracle?

By compromise.

II

Before the Kustrin tragedy Frederick hated his father, but he did not really fear him. The blows he received were too closely associated with plate-throwing . . . spitting into food to keep others from eating it . . . belching, wind-breaking, the King bursting his breeches at a ball. Out of hearing Frederick jeered at his father, called him Stumpy, and *Ragotin,* after the character in Scarron's *Roman Comique,* ridiculed both his appearance and his manners, and thought him an ignoramus.

Suddenly from this level of ignominy and disgust Frederick William rose to the terrifying stature of an insane Roman

Cæsar or Greek tyrant. Over the headless body of the young officer upon the Kustrin ramparts he towered, a monstrous figure menacing to all Prussia and in particular to the son imprisoned within the thick walls of the Oder fortress. In the presence of this apparition Frederick was no longer able to write French verses. He bowed his head, he humbled himself, and when the angry parent shouted *Heraus!* like the bear trained to drill with the giants he obediently emerged and took his place at the appointed desk in the Kustrin Chamber of War and Domains.

The will to have his own way was still strong in him, but while his father lived Frederick saw that he would have to conform.

III

The dead friend — what of him?

Frederick's nature, despite his many protestations of the sacredness of friendship in his life, did not permit him poignant memories. He had already at eighteen accepted the theory of predestination — that each chapter of his life had far back in the eternal ages been arranged inexorably by an inscrutable destiny. It was not his pleading, nay almost command, to accompany him on the escape, which had cost Katte his life. Katte had been predestined to die when and how he did. Eons before the house of Hohenzollern existed — when Brandenburg was part of some vast primordial wilderness — the procession to Kustrin on that grey November morning was being planned . . . it was all irrevocably fixed then . . . his own leaning from the window and crying "Forgive me! Forgive me!" . . . Katte's bow, the gallant salute with the hat, and the reply, "It is sweet to die for a prince I love so well" — all fixed, all planned, the tide of time had only brought it forward and deposited it at its proper place in history. Frederick, who took

this viewpoint towards every episode in his life which might lead him into unproductive broodings and vain regrettings, who could always translate an unpleasant emotion into such an epigram as *"In this world one must love nothing too much,"* and then forget about it, was soon showing what seemed to many a heartless indifference to the loss of his friend.

He came indeed (as he was wont later to judge his generals when his own recklessness had cost him a campaign) to fix upon Katte the responsibility for the flight's failure. Katte was indiscreet — he talked too much — he had been the one who first aroused the King's suspicions. Had he relied on himself alone the attempt would have succeeded.

Keith and Katte both — these two friends who seem once to have been so close to Frederick — are misty figures in the story of his youth. Neither, it seems, was good-looking. Keith, from the description sent by the angry King of Prussia to London, after an attempt to arrest the runaway officer in Holland had failed, was "of middle height — slight — thin — pale of complexion, and squints badly." Katte, as Wilhelmine remembered him, had thick eyebrows meeting over the nose, and a very dark complexion much marked by smallpox — he painted a little, talked well and played the flute. Frederick, in all the pages of his writings, never mentions either.

IV

"Not so much the loss of my liberty in an unhappy arrest as my own reflections on the offense I have committed have brought me to my senses."

This line sounds the keynote of the letter which Frederick writes to his father from the Kustrin fortress when he fears death for himself. There may yet be hope if he can get the

King to believe that his own conscience rather than force is responsible for this humble appeal to start life anew.

Actually there has been no such change of heart as he would have his father imagine.

"I have suffered sufficiently for an exaggerated crime," Frederick will declare bitterly later, and this is what he thinks now.

But he has been shown the difference between individual strength and the power of a despot upon a throne, and he has learned how to wait. The King's frequent attacks of gout, his strokes of apoplexy, and the symptoms of dropsy which are now appearing, make it very possible that over eating or drinking, a fit of rage, or a paralytic stroke will shortly incapacitate him for governing or bring about his death. But until that moment comes he is always dangerous.

Frederick was taken to Kustrin in October, he leaves the fortress on Sunday, November the nineteenth, having been six weeks in prison. But not yet does he have complete freedom. He is released from the fortress, but he may not leave the town. His life has been spared him, he has partial liberty, but he is still in disgrace. He has not been reinstated in the army — the guard has orders not to present arms when he passes — all soldiers are forbidden to salute him. A house has been provided for him in the town where he is to live as simply and quietly as a private person, and by the King's orders in the department where he must work he shall sit among the clerks and always when he has to sign a document do so not in the space provided for people of importance but "quite low down."

The privilege of not having to live with his father makes Frederick at first accept very gratefully the limitations of his Kustrin life. . . . But soon the little provincial town becomes monotonous. . . . Through the long dreary winter what can his imagination find to feed on in the daily round of copying

documents and social intercourse with the families of petty government officials he despises? He wants to be in brilliant skeptical Paris and he is still here in primitive Brandenburg. He craves the society of Voltaires and he must put up with that of bookkeepers. How much of his youth will slip away while he does the work of a lowly clerk? . . . He begins to content himself with signing. . . . From the King, who reads all reports he is supposed to copy, there comes promptly the marginal comment, "It is not enough for Fritz to sign — he must work himself."

Like the narrow streets of the town this uneventful existence presses in on him. From the top of the walls the wide-stretching plain of the Oder can be seen, but even this is forbidden territory — he may not pass through the gates. He must always dine in his own little house with Von Wolden, Von Natzmer and Von Rohwedell. He must never visit a woman. All these prohibitions he violates occasionally but he knows at great risk.

In the main he conforms, and in the main his father is satisfied. It is the King now who permits himself to mock. When Frederick, to arouse sympathy, feigns serious illness, he says, "He is *predestined* to live so there is no danger of his dying. Weeds always thrive." When Frederick, humiliated at being shorn of all authority, pleads to be given his army commission back again, he replies, "It is not necessary for all men to follow the same trade. Some work to become great soldiers — others prefer to be poets and play the flute." When Frederick, through the steward Wolden, hints at more liberties, the answer quickly comes —

"He is not at Kustrin for his amusement."

V

He talks finance and commerce with Hille. He writes insipid French verses. He pores over his household accounts — always carefully scrutinized by the King — apologizing one month for spending too much on butter.

He composes his regular fortnightly letter to the King, slipping in as carefully as he can now a request for a lighter suit as the weather has grown warmer — "It is not the fashion in Prussia," replies the King, "This is a French fashion." — and now the more important one of being allowed to travel, in order to complete his studies in government. — "If I had done what you have done," comes the answer, "I would be ashamed to let anyone see my face."

He sends in also, written neatly in his own handwriting, a paper entitled, *Upon the Resuscitation of Flax Cultivation,* which Hille assures his father Frederick thought out and wrote entirely by himself. The King is not so certain of this. "You surprise me very much," he writes to Hille. "Do you suppose I am going to believe that the Prince is the author of such a project? I know the truth of the matter. Besides, I do not at all wish him to begin by inventing plans. I have told you to teach him what is *solid*. I will not hear a word of things in the air. To manufacture wind, one needs no master."

Never again will the Prince-Royal of Prussia be to the inhabitants of Kustrin the familiar figure that he is nowadays. Wearing a light grey coat with narrow silver lace, he may be seen any day on the streets. One of the King's complaints against Frederick has always been that he walks too much like a dancing master — "on the tips of his toes, never planting his feet squarely and firmly on the ground." Hille assures his Majesty that a great improvement is to be noticed here. "In appearance you would find him much changed — he has a

strong, easy step, and I no longer perceive that air of *marquis* which he had formerly." This is written to please the father, to arouse his curiosity to the point of sending for his son, and to smooth the way for leaving Kustrin. Frederick still looks up to the French dandy as his model in deportment — he tries to walk, talk, gesture and take snuff in the French fashion — he follows eagerly the latest whim in hairdressing at Versailles.

But those responsible to the King for the Prince-Royal's conduct and safety are growing restless under the suspense. They dare not disobey the father, they fear to anger the son. The strain of trying to sit on two chairs at once is only relieved by the hope that "a certain person might die suddenly, and then we should be at our ease." To humor the King alone, to cater to Frederick's French fancies, is humanly possible, but to attempt to please at one and the same time a father and son of such dissimilar temperaments, who can do it?

Besides, Kustrin life pleases Frederick's companions no more than it does him. Wolden, as much as Frederick, wants "to escape from this hole." His letters, like Hille's, are eloquent with the Prince-Royal's complete change of heart, the deep and sincere love he bears his father, the substitution of manly behavior for French foppiness — and they too receive the usual discount. The King has no intention of keeping Frederick at Kustrin forever, but he intends to let him leave it only when he himself is quite ready.

VI

The twelve months of probation at Kustrin were of more importance to Frederick than he himself realized at the time. He was in his twentieth year. Thus far he had been continually dominated and harassed by the immediate presence of his father. Now, in a sense he was free, if not to go

where he wanted, at least to acquire knowledge in his own way.

This knowledge might be of a character that he pretended to despise, but beneath his pose of supercilious contempt for the practical he was interested. Hitherto his dreams of Glory had been vague, resting on no solid foundation of detail, vast sky-shapes changing form with each passing fancy as they floated in the void of his imagination, and always apart from reality. He still wanted to be great . . . admired and talked about everywhere . . . a phenomenon of his century. He still, recoiling against suppressions, craved the release of action, power and accomplishment. But at Kustrin, where he was forced into contact with the problems of practial government, these vague desires became concentrated into a more precise form, while at the same time he saw how they could be fulfilled.

At Kustrin he learned where his father's money came from. He became familiar with Prussian industry and trade. When he arrived he knew as Hille would tell afterwards "all of Aristotle's laws for the writing of poetry," but very little about the past history or future problems of Prussia. . . . The ships he saw plying back and forth along the Oder aroused his interest. . . . He still wanted to gain immortality as another Alexander or Cæsar but now he localized his conquests. To add this rich Austrian province of Silesia from which came the Oder to Brandenburg—that would do for a beginning. To unite Brandenburg and East Prussia by annexing Polish Prussia was also a logical ambition. Frederick was willing now to take an interest in the army because he saw how this powerful machine his father had created needed care and close supervision to be kept in good working order. He saw how interdependent were the army and the treasury, the grenadier and the tax-collector, the first making possible the preserving

of present possessions and the acquisition of new ones, and the second supplying the pay, equipment and food needed by the soldier.

But his ambition did not rest satisfied with being a great soldier. He wanted to be Alexander and Aristotle combined, Man of Thought as well as Man of Action. . . . To be not only different from his father, but different from every king of his age. . . . Could he hope to excel his father in thrifty administration? Could he hope to eclipse Louis XIV's reputation for magnificence? Could he hope to gain greater military renown than Charles XII? No — but he could be a king who combined in one person all these admirable qualities, with verse-writing, philosophy and flute-playing added.

VII

Sometimes, over the dinner-table at his humble Kustrin home, Frederick would describe the kind of life he meant to lead when he became King. With the exception of his liking for fine clothes, which he loses later on, and the dancing which he gives up, the description corresponds closely to the life he actually does lead later.

He told how he would dress always in uniform — but wearing magnificent cloaks — and when Hille became curious about pleasures continued —

"I assure you — but don't mention it — that the greatest of my pleasures is reading. I am fond of music, but much fonder of dancing. I hate hunting, but like riding on horseback. Were I King I would do all this as my fancy dictated, but I would devote a great part of my time to business. I would take care moreover to have my table suitably and delicately supplied, but without profusion. I would have good musicians, but few of them, and never at meals, for music with my meals prevents me from

eating. I would dine alone and in public, but at supper I would have my friends about me and treat them well."

But I would devote a great part of my time to business. In these words spoken at Kustrin Frederick shows that he appreciates the importance of the practical. He as much as announces that under him as under his father government in Prussia will be government not by ministers or mistresses but by the King. But where with his father the means seems sometimes to have become the end, as in the case of giant recruits, the whole army in fact which he likes to drill so much that he never dares risk it in battle, with Frederick the army, Prussia itself, are only stepping-stones to personal glory. He can and will work hard, but never until his old age from any love of "facts."

VIII

On August the fifteenth, the King of Prussia's birthday, the long desired event happens. Frederick's father, it is true, does not send for him, but returning from a trip to Lithuania he does pay a visit to Kustrin.

What will he say? How will he act? Frederick has not seen him since the scene at Wesel, exactly a year and a day ago. From this interview the Prince-Royal desires liberty, reinstatement in the army. He is also anxious on another score. The King has definitely chosen a husband for Wilhelmine, and he too is to be married, as soon as the King can decide upon a proper wife. Who will this woman be?

One swift and curious glance before with humble lowered eyes he falls at his father's feet. . . . But that glance tells him that the King in a year has aged a lot — he is fatter, his face more swollen with blood, he does not look as though he had long to live.

The King commands his son to rise — he rises. In the inter-

view that follows Frederick William does most of the talking — Frederick listens and looks contrite. The father like the son attaches much importance to the meeting. He approaches it as an excellent opportunity to recapitulate all those past misdeeds of Frederick of which the attempt to run away is merely the most outstanding example.

He expresses amazement at Frederick's ingratitude for all that has been done for him. "By fair means and by foul," he says, thus himself summing up in a sentence his philosophy of how to educate an heir, "I endeavored to make you an honest man."

What was Frederick's return for this solicitude? He had let himself be cheated by French money-lenders, he had aped the French in everything, he had read bad books and paid secret librarians enormous fees, he had adopted that most damnable theory of predestination. All this he knew was against his father's wishes, but he did it just the same. Did he perhaps think his obstinacy would win out in the end? "My boy, if you were sixty or seventy years old you should not dictate to me!"

From bad he had gone to worse. Affairs with women, though evil enough, might be forgiven, but not desertion, not trying to bolt the country. Had he intended going to England? Frederick admits this would probably have been his ultimate destination. Very well, then hear what would have happened! The King, trying hard to hold himself in control through the meeting, knots his gouty hands into fists, and with eyes flashing, describes the revenge he would have taken on the women.

"Your mother would have suffered terribly, for I should naturally have suspected her of being your accomplice. Your sister I would have shut up in a place where she would never again see sun, moon or stars. Then on with my army into Hanover — on to burn, smite and destroy — yes, if it cost me my life, my army, and my people!"

When he has quieted down somewhat he proceeds to satisfy his curiosity on a point that has long troubled it. He asks —

"Did you corrupt Katte, or did Katte corrupt you?"

Frederick answers —

"I corrupted him."

Here is an answer which pleases the King greatly. His mind can be more at rest now upon the score of army loyalty. That Katte should yield to the Prince-Royal's solicitations that he run away with him he can comprehend if not excuse, but for an officer in the royal bodyguard to take the initiative in such a plot would indeed be a monstrous sin. He growls —

"Well, I am glad to hear you tell the truth for once."

IX

He now allows himself a rough tone of banter. So Frederick finds Kustrin a dull place? Does not think Wusterhausen such a terrible hole now, eh? Would like to have back his uniform, "your shroud, as I know you called it." Then with a sudden angry sneer —

"But I can quite understand my company is not good enough for you. I do not have Paris manners, cannot bow and smirk and skip around like a fop, am no good at making French *bon mots*. — Thank God for all that! — I am a German prince, and mean to live and die only this!"

An outburst in which the King of Prussia sums up all his hatred of foreigners, all his resentment against those larger European nations whose armies in the past have used Brandenburg for their battlefield. The man speaking is not the middle-aged monarch of forty but that energetic young prince of twenty-four who came to the throne so determined to rid the kingdom of the foreign sycophants who exploited it under his father, the son still smarting under the humiliation of jibes

directed at the upstart Brandenburg elector who had made himself a king. It also contains all Frederick William's prejudice against what he is not himself, and therefore does not care to understand.

He pauses to let it sink home. Then he says something which touches Frederick on the raw.

"You thought to attract attention — to become someone by running away. . . . Well, you see now what that has ended in. . . . For a while you created a stir, but already you are forgotten. . . . No one in Berlin or Potsdam ever asks about you. . . . No one anywhere in fact cares if you are dead or alive."

A lie! — Beneath his humility Frederick has flushed with anger. He cannot bear to think that he has ceased to attract attention, that from being a person discussed throughout Europe he has dwindled again to the level of a little provincial German prince.

He had meant to ask the King for permission to travel but his courage now leaves him at the last moment. Nor does the King volunteer any information about his future wife.

But before leaving Kustrin the father adopts a kindlier tone. "Continue to reform," he says, "and I will look after you." In presence of the assembled crowd Frederick, as the King goes to his carriage, kneels and kisses the royal gaiters.

X

What are Frederick's feelings after this interview?

The domineering nature and intolerance of his father stand out for him the more clearly after a year's separation. He is bitterly disappointed that no word was said about his leaving Kustrin, and equally so that his marriage has not been mentioned.

But the visit brings him privileges. In the department of war

and agriculture he now sits at the top, next to the president, and on the left of the vacant place always reserved for the King. He can leave the town, but he must report to the governor, and never under any excuse stay away overnight. He may hunt.

To strengthen his position with the King Frederick suggests possible improvements on the big estates near Kustrin from which his father draws revenue. . . . A marsh drained here would make good corn-land. . . . An abandoned church there might well be turned into a profitable brewery. . . . Knowing that the King (though often compelling others to do so) will never himself place money where it brings in less than ten per cent, he is careful however not to appear rash in these suggestions. Whenever he sees a big boy working in the fields who seems a promising candidate for the famous Potsdam regiment Frederick mentions this too in his letters.

The King sees improvement but is still wary about appearing too credulous. The keen delight his son takes in hunting nowadays cannot make him forget the days when he would steal away from the swine-hunts to play the flute. His passion for work is always suspect. If he has really come to realize the value of money why does he still waste it upon piddling little snuffboxes? "You tell me that you wish to re-enter the army. I do not think your wish is heartfelt. You only say it to flatter me."

This last is his most serious doubt. How keenly does Frederick actually feel the disgrace of wearing civilian costume?

"If I were to send to Paris for a flute-master, a dozen fifes, a theatrical company, a great orchestra, two dozen dancing-masters, a dozen dandies, if I were to build a fine theatre — you would like all that much better than grenadiers. For grenadiers in your eyes are blackguards, whereas a dandy, a little Frenchman (ein Franzoschen), a scrap of wit, a little musician (ein musiqueschen), all of these seem to you noble, royal, truly

Frederick William's Tobacco Parliament. The Prince Royal disapproves of the horseplay

worthy of a prince. — Know yourself thoroughly! — Up to the time of Kustrin these were your true feelings. What your inclinations really are now I know not, but I shall see from your conduct."

A scrap of wit. Others have already noticed how hard Frederick will strain himself to attract attention. "The Prince," says Hille, "flatters himself upon possessing a large quantity of French wit." Hille believes that when he becomes King the best way of winning his friendship will be to praise his epigrams, certainly not as with the present King by sending him big recruits even though three and a half yards high. This weakness will undoubtedly lead him to make mistakes in the choice of his ministers, since will he not think those wisest who flatter him the most, and can respond in kind? A Frenchman, who jests in a sprightly manner, should therefore always have the advantage over a German blurting out the blunt truth.

"He scarcely knows the Germans," continues Hille. "He thinks that those into whose company he was thrown at Potsdam fall far short of his ideal of the witty man, or the one who has been polished by the reading of French books. Hence his strange predilection for that nation. He believes that the French are really like what they depict themselves to be in their books. Those whom he sees do not remove this idea, as he thinks them spoiled by association with Germans. His fancy discovers in all Frenchmen merits of which they themselves are unaware."

These observations upon Frederick made by a man who sees a great deal of him in his twentieth year suggest that Prussia under its next king will certainly not be strengthened in its position as an independent country. "I am a German prince, and mean to live and die only that!" says Frederick William proudly. Frederick, though by no means fulfilling Hille's

prophecy, will all his life regret that he was not born heir to the throne of France.

XI

The King rode away from the Kustrin meeting with his son in the main satisfied. Frederick, he knew from his spies, had by no means completely reformed. He still dressed his hair in private like a Frenchman, he still played the forbidden flute, now and again he still had a clandestine meeting with a woman. But these disobediences he could overlook. Fearing that dissipation had left the heir sterile, the King even expressed himself to Grumbkow as secretly pleased when there were rumors that a child born to Colonel Wreech's wife at Kustrin was not the colonel's but Frederick's.

Not only was Frederick William growing old, and therefore less able to take issue on every point with Frederick's obstinacy, but also he was becoming satisfied to force his will upon the heir in the really important things. He had crushed the army plot (as he still thought of it), he had obtained through his policy of terror that complete confession of guilt which Frederick had so insolently refused him at Frankfurt and Wesel. Also he had shown his jack-pudding of a cousin across the Channel that the King of Prussia was not a man to be trifled with. By executing Katte, locking up Frederick in Kustrin, and keeping the heir a virtual prisoner in the town for a year, he had shown people not only in Prussia but throughout the world that when the King of Prussia demanded to be obeyed he meant what he said, and was not merely indulging in that thing he himself most detested — *wind-macherei.*

Having played the part of executioner he was now occupied with match-making. The Queen had played around with marriages long enough — it was time for him to take a hand. For Wilhelmine he had chosen a member of another branch of

the Hohenzollern family — Prince Henry of Bayreuth, the tiny principality lying two hundred miles to the south-west of Berlin. The proper German wife for Frederick he had not as yet discovered, but he was having "the princesses of Germany taken thorough survey of by trustworthy people." She must be God-fearing and thrifty. Above all she must come from a family that would never try to tell the King of Prussia how to run his own kingdom. Whether or not Frederick found her to his taste was of little matter. He had never seen this English princess Amelia his mother pretended he loved so much, but only written her letters.

Wilhelmine's marriage came first. Having been told from her earliest childhood by their ambitious mother that she was destined to be Queen of England, it was a bitter blow for Frederick's sister to be forced in the end to become the wife of a German princeling. She tried to tell herself that she was sacrificing herself to smooth out the future for Frederick — but actually she knew that from the moment that her father had lifted his foot to Sir Charles Hotham there was no further prospect of her marrying the Prince of Wales. She resigned herself to the inevitable, finding indeed the young Prince of Bayreuth greatly preferable to the old Duke of Weissenfels who had been her father's first choice.

Frederick was not at the wedding. She had expected him to be there but the King kept him in Kustrin until three days after the ceremony when he was allowed to appear at a ball given in the Berlin palace. To Wilhelmine he seemed older . . . fatter . . . by no means as handsome as he used to be. She thought him cold and ungrateful in his manner towards her, and noticed that he said scarcely a word to her husband. What meant this change in her favorite brother? She refused to understand, and feeling hurt and resentful she left Prussia to begin her married life at Bayreuth.

XII

To Wilhelmine Frederick's behavior is inexplicable, but only because she wishes to have it so as a solace to the knowledge that she has made a bad match.

The truth is that Frederick comes to Berlin furious that his sister has allowed herself to be forced into this marriage. For what Wilhelmine does, that will he have to do. Wolden, through whom he tries to influence Grumbkow, who in turn can influence the king, writes to the general, " Good God, what a misfortune it will be if an attempt should be made to force the inclination of the prince, who is by no means disposed to choose before he has seen, and to buy a pig in a poke like his sister."

He blames Wilhelmine for yielding, as now he too will have to yield. He is irritated by the way she seems to expect him to be grateful, by her taking the attitude that she has sacrificed herself for his welfare. Her husband, the petty, stammering Prince of Bayreuth, he scorns. Of what help to him in the realization of his grand dreams can ever be this insignificant princeling, whose besotted father has already brought his diminutive state to bankruptcy? Wilhelmine, Queen of England, would be a powerful ally, Wilhelmine, Margravine of Bayreuth, is of no further consequence. Frederick hates this German prince who has ruined his sister's future.

Is there perhaps another more emotional, less easily definable reaction? How much of Frederick's love for Wilhelmine is natural brotherly-and-sisterly affection, how much a mystical love for a dual self? Wilhelmine looks like Frederick — she has the same large eyes, the same brow, the same thin, severe lips. Her mind is a male mind, she herself says that at her wedding with her hair dressed high, she " looked like a boy." The women towards whom Frederick has been drawn by desire have all

like the Countess Orczelska at Dresden been remarkable for mannish traits. Does this young Brandenburg prince, with his curious nostalgia for the far-away, the stupendous, the odd and bizarre in history, dwell in fancy upon those customs of the Pharaohs which allowed brother and sister to rule as man and wife?

He returns to Kustrin determined to delay his own marriage by every possible excuse. From Kustrin in a few months he goes to Ruppin where the King, who at Berlin re-admitted him to the army, has given him a regiment. With greater liberty granted him he now craves complete independence.

To all who have influence with the King, but at the same time wish to please his successor, he urges obtaining him permission to travel and choose his own wife. But Frederick does not really want to marry at all. In letters to friends he now frequently signs himself "Frederick the Philosopher," and philosophers he knows should not burden themselves with wives. He cannot forget that Voltaire, his greatest admiration, has a mistress but not a wife.

XIII

On the fourth of February the King briefly informs him by letter that the wife has been found — she is the Princess of Brunswick-Bevern. Steps are being taken to fix up a house in Berlin for their home — the wedding will take place next winter — as soon as he has a son he may travel.

As soon as he has a son! First the wife by command, then the child. Frederick, angry as this letter makes him, still allows himself an ironical picture of the King standing beside the marriage bed controlling by military count the movements necessary in the production of a grandson — in it he sees summed up his father's lifelong domineering attitude.

What is the woman like? — Neither ugly nor beautiful, says his father — "a God-fearing creature, which is all in all. She will please you as much as she does me."

Frederick, full of mistrust, writes to Grumbkow, "I would rather be a cuckold or married to the most notorious harlot in Berlin than tied up with a woman I should be ashamed to appear with in public." An ugly German wife as well as a coarse German father! He, who prides himself upon his sophistication, his French wit, to be cast for the domestic life of a petty German prince!

Of all ridicule Frederick fears most this one of stupidity and lack of taste. How can he persevere in his dream of being the bachelor king of Europe — a philosopher king holding forth in a Prussian Athens — when already a pious, plain-faced, unintelligent German wife has been chosen for him!

Never will he marry her! — Now it is that for an instant Frederick uncovers his true feelings on the execution of Katte, and his own treatment since. "I have suffered sufficiently for an exaggerated crime," he writes to Grumbkow, "and I will not promise to extend my unhappiness into the future. I have still one resource left — a pistol shot can end it all!"

Grumbkow, having earned his Austrian money by helping to break off the English marriages, is now willing to reconcile son and father. But such talk of suicide makes him uneasy. He expresses horror at the unnatural thought — tries to scare Frederick into obedience. "I shall never forget what the King said to me at Wusterhausen while your Royal Highness was in the fortress of Kustrin, and I attempted to take your part. 'No, Grumbkow, remember what I now say to you, though pray God I be wrong — my son will never die a natural death! — God only grant that he fall not into the hands of the executioner!'"

Words that give Frederick pause. Does his father *want* him

to kill himself? This certainly would be a solution, solving forever the problem of their clash of wills. Never will he give the King this satisfaction! But flight or submission are the only alternatives. Since flight is impossible, he must submit.

XIV

Frederick's letters to his own friends and friends of the King — for those to his father continue to sound only the one note of obedience — now lose the angry note, and take on the satirical.

He has remembered that neither philosophers nor French wits become indignant, and blow up in violent rages — that these are qualities rather to be associated with clownish German princes like his father.

A pinch of snuff! Nonchalance! Frederick writes, "The King would feign make me amorous with stripes, but unfortunately not being of the nature of the ass, I much fear that he will not succeed. . . . Yes, I love the fair sex, but only with a volatile love. I only want to enjoy them, I despise them afterwards. Judge then if I am of the wood that good husbands are made of. I am enraged to become such, but I make a virtue of necessity."

He means to marry as a gallant man — "that is, leaving madame to act as she thinks fit, and for my part doing just as I please also. *Vive la liberté!*"

His contempt and dislike for women comes out sharply in the words —

"No woman for me in the government of anything whatever in this world! I think the man who suffers himself to be governed by a woman the greatest coward in the world, and unworthy to bear the worthy name of man."

In these letters written during the year before his marriage

there occurs another significant paragraph. Frederick refers to his treatment by his father — how one moment he seems in, the next out of, favor — but his words now constitute an interesting commentary upon his own treatment of Voltaire twenty years later.

"I find more and more every day that the world is a droll place, and that nothing in it is more variable than the favor of the great. A false report, a mere nothing, are capable of cancelling all the services one has rendered, and all the pains one has taken to insinuate oneself into their good graces."

XV

The formal bethrothal was in March. Frederick had already corresponded with the Princess of Bevern but now he saw her for the first time.

A girl of eighteen, very German-looking, with blue eyes and flaxen hair. . . . Her face on the whole pretty, except for very bad teeth. . . . In manner very shy and *gauche*.

They exchanged rings formally in the presence of their parents. The girl, knowing she was being forced on the Prince-Royal of Prussia against his inclination, shrank away, timid and frightened. Frederick remained cold and distant. But he returned to Ruppin thinking she might be a great deal worse. At least she had a negative personality that he could always dominate with his own, thrust without effort into the background of his life. He guessed rightly that she would never meddle with politics as his own mother had always done.

Still if he must marry an obscure German princess he meant to emphasize the sacrifice he was making solely to please his father. So while in Berlin for the betrothal he kept a glum face — he was polite to the Princess, but he never sought out her company, and when they were brought together he turned his

back on her as quickly as possible. This frigid attitude he kept up in his letters afterwards, sending to Wilhelmine a very unfavorable description of his future wife, and commenting in conclusion, "You may judge by all this if I find her to my taste or not!"

The marriage must be, so he resigned himself to it. But during the year that passed between the betrothal and the wedding Frederick was always in his heart hoping for that event which would suddenly make him free — his father's death.

The King, doubtful as was the state of his health, did not die. On the twelfth of June, 1733, when Frederick was twenty-one, he was married to the Princess of Brunswick-Bevern. "My dear sister," he wrote to Wilhelmine, "A minute ago the whole ceremony was finished, and God be praised it is over and done with! I hope you will take it as a mark of my friendship that I send you the first news of it."

The will of the father had again triumphed. But for Frederick this marriage never went beyond the ceremony. He refused to live with the Princess as man and wife. On the wedding night, seen safely in bed with the bride by the exultant King, Frederick as soon as they are left alone excuses himself on the score that he smells smoke and fears the palace is on fire — he gets up from the bridal bed and never returns to it.

XVI

It is shortly after his marriage that Frederick first sees war.

The King of Poland had died recently, and the throne of this country being not hereditary but elective a new monarch had to be found. France meant to control the election so that Stanislas Lesczinski, the father-in-law of Louis XV, would be the next king, Austria and Russia pushed forward the son of the dead king, Augustus. Frederick's father refused to be dragged as

King of Prussia into the hostilities that broke out between France and Austria on the Rhine, but as an elector he reluctantly furnished his contingent of troops to the imperial army.

On the Rhine Frederick has his first and only meeting with Prince Eugene. The famous general who in conjunction with the Englishman Marlborough had inflicted such crushing defeats upon the French during the War of the Spanish Succession was now an old man. Prince Eugene — this Savoyan by birth, who in an age of soldier-adventurers as willing to fight under one flag as another had tried as a youth for a commission in the French army, only to have this scornfully refused him by Louis XIV, and who then later in the Austrian service became the most formidable enemy of France — had now for many years been the chief figure in imperial diplomacy as well as its greatest general. With what remained of his rapidly failing strength he was still trying to safeguard for Maria Theresa in practical ways the vast and scattered Austrian possessions which her father, the Emperor Charles the Sixth, believed he could make safe for her with documents.

Prince Eugene saw what a dangerous blow the preceding Hapsburg, Emperor Ludwig, had struck at his own interests when he allowed Frederick's grandfather to take the title of King of Prussia. "The ministers who advised him to do this should have been hanged," he often said angrily. . . . But the damage was done. . . . The one thing now left to do was to keep Prussia friendly to the Emperor. It was Prince Eugene who had worked so hard to destroy the alliance between England and Prussia, and who for some time past had been privately sending the Prince-Royal through Seckendorf money with which to pay his debts. Now, he made use of all his prestige as a warrior and all his skill as a courtier to win over the next King of Prussia.

Frederick had long been anxious to meet the greatest soldier

of the day. Not only Prince Eugene's glorious achievements in war but also the many stories current of his feminine personality, how as a young man he looked and took pleasure in dressing like a girl, used indeed to sell himself as a prostitute to old men, as did the handsome Greek boys to the voluptuaries of Athens, have aroused his curiosity. Similar traits he remembers were Alexander's, Cæsar's also — indeed they seemed inseparable from the natures of all heroes who have acquired Glory on a large scale. Among the French generals he most admires, the great Condé, Turenne and Marshal Villars are all known to have indulged in this so-called Greek vice. He is interested because he feels that his own nature contains this very feminine quality, because these facts all fit in with his theory that gross male kings like his father are incapable of feeling that subtle and burning desire for Glory which for him takes the place of women — they possess their wives and are satisfied, while he belongs to that other order of men always reaching out for the unattainable.

He comes to the Rhine anxious to show Prince Eugene that he is by no means the son of his coarse father. Into the person of the little old man huddled in a cloak who greets him, Frederick's imagination places all the glamour that is missing in fact. His carefully rehearsed speech turns around the declaration that "he has come to see how a hero gathers laurels." Old Eugene, experienced at the trade of returning compliments, replies that he is grieved the Prince was not with him on his previous campaigns as he might have taught him something that would be of use to him in the future. "For everything about you tells me that you will some day be a great commander," he finishes with a smile.

In this remark of the Austrian there is obviously an intent to flatter the future King of Prussia, so that the army handed over to him by his father may be always at the service of Austria,

but when the old general of seventy makes this statement to the foppish heir of twenty-one, it may well be because he recognizes also his own qualities in Frederick, that in the flash of understanding which passes between people of abnormal natures he does really see in Frederick the essential characteristics of the great soldier — that colossal vanity and megalomania — loneliness of temperament, sense of isolation in a world of people better adjusted pathologically to the existing environment — which has always made the Alexanders and Cæsars press furiously on towards their goal, and which feeds on the grim pageantry of destruction displayed by battlefields.

Eugene invites the Prince-Royal of Prussia to his councils of war. He asks his opinions, listens with interest to what he has to say, and has him visit the trenches of Phillipsburg.

XVII

Reconnoitring one day, Frederick comes under fire. Cannonballs from the French batteries crash down through the trees lining the road along which he rides with a group of staff officers.

It is noticed that he shows no signs of fear. He rides on, chatting gaily with the officers, apparently indifferent to the danger.

Indeed, it is doubtful if Frederick at this time or ever after in the many battles through which he comes unscathed knows the sensation of fear as commonly felt. Perhaps it is there, but other more powerful emotions push it into the background. His " immoderate desire for show," as Hille called it, predominates on this occasion. He feels himself watched . . . knows that eyes are on his bridle-hand to notice its slightest tremble . . . detects ears listening sharply to catch the slightest falter in his voice. He revels in anticipation of the report that will

go in to the King of the conduct under fire of his effeminate son, in giving this proof that courage is by no means a monopoly of boorishness and brutality. Later, in his own wars, it will be the feeling that his is the mind controlling the progress of the battle — furious desire to see his plans succeed — which keeps his nerves steady, as well as this sense of the dramatic.

But now he is only an observer. And were he not there is little glory to be won under this old general unwilling to tarnish his military reputation with a last defeat. "The great Eugene," writes Frederick to a friend at Ruppin, as the prince refuses to risk a battle with the French, "is but a shadow of his former self." But one thing does not pass Frederick's eyes unobserved while he is on the Rhine — and this is his father's influence on other European armies. "The Prince has grown as heavy or heavier in his drills than we are," he writes. "And for this the Austrian officers curse us."

The war, with both sides cautious, the French timid before Eugene's great reputation, Eugene afraid to stake it in a last battle, ends itself. Frederick returns to Prussia. His father, who has also been to the Rhine campaign, is already there seriously ill with dropsy. When autumn comes Frederick for the first time, as the King is too ill to do it himself, has placed upon him the responsibility of making the annual tour of Prussia to inspect the local governments and the fortresses.

XVIII

This year of 1734 was the year that the Emperor's eldest daughter, Maria Theresa, married the Duke of Lorraine. It was also the year that the Emperor, still hoping to have a son, but still as a precaution in case he died without one, busy night and day obtaining the signatures of the Powers to his Pragmatic

Sanction, finally persuaded France to sign. But these signatures he was getting were worthless except in his own short-sighted eyes. To obtain them Charles was cheerfully double-crossing one country after the other. He already had Frederick William's promise to respect Pragmatic Sanction — marking him off the doubtful list he now negotiated with the Prince of Sulzbach to hand over to the latter the King of Prussia's rights by inheritance to the towns of Juliers and Berg, though these rights were at this very moment being guaranteed by Austria to Prussia. . . . A policy which when the crucial moment came must necessarily leave his young daughter without friends. . . . More soldiers and fewer dubious documents, muttered the old Prince Eugene, would be better arguments for her right to inherit.

XIX

A large two-storied stone building beside a lake. The penetrating Brandenburg wind howls over the marshes that stretch away to right and left. A mile off in the little fortress town of Ruppin mechanical Prussian soldiers go through their drill.

But statues in the grounds — figures of Muses sitting, standing and lying — here a Greek warrior, there an amorous Venus icy-cold to the touch in this frigid Northern clime, near the water a marble philosopher staring at the swans — and the inscription over the entrance, *Friderico Tranquillitatem Colenti,* indicate that efforts have been made to surround it with a classical atmosphere.

This is the mansion of Rheinsberg given to Frederick by the King after his marriage, and now his home until he succeeds to the throne.

Rheinsberg is to Frederick the Prince-Royal what Sans-Souci will be to Frederick the King. Here he lives surrounded by a miniature court of congenial companions — Count Keyserling,

handsome and gay, but also a good linguist, who corrects the spelling of Frederick's French verses, Jordan, small, dark and industrious, his librarian, Baron Knobelsdorf, the architect who remodelled the mansion for him, Captain Chasot, a French officer met on the Rhine campaign, Fredersdorf, the flute-playing valet who becomes one of his closest intimates. His wife is here too part of the time, but he sees as little of her as possible.

XX

A feverish desire for knowledge possesses Frederick at Rheinsberg.

His father's late illness, that tour of Prussia and the fortresses, have shown him the crown suddenly within grasp. "I am studying with all my might," he writes to Suhm, now Saxon minister at St. Petersburg, "and doing everything in my power to acquire the knowledge necessary for the performance of all those duties which my station will impose upon me — I strive to make myself better, and to imbue my mind with all the most brilliant models that antiquity and modern times have presented us with."

All the time he has frivolled away in the past! Frederick is desperately eager to make up for it. What he really means when he writes to Suhm is that he wants through study and thought to combine in his own person all the excellences of all the heroes past and present. From Rheinsberg he corresponds with distinguished foreigners, having in view the bringing of them to Berlin when he becomes King.

In these letters he takes the philosophical tone, ridiculing the pretensions of those who call themselves the lords of the earth, making frequent use of such phrases as, "My house is not a place for those who are fond of noisy pleasures. Tranquillity, quiet and the search for truth are always to be preferred to the

giddy and turbulent diversions of this world." Later on in his life Frederick will be asking cynically, What is Truth?

The heir to the throne of Prussia, busy at the same time studying the resources of his kingdom, deep in plans for increasing the size of the army and making important conquests, assures his intellectual friends that a modest sufficiency is the happiest state.

"Too much grandeur is infinitely burdensome and fatiguing," declares the philosopher-prince of Rheinsberg, "while poverty detracts too much from a certain nobility which forms the basis of all human character." A modest sufficiency, that is the happy medium.

He keeps repeating his contempt for those follies in which the world places all its pride, assures the philosopher Wolff (the same Wolff chased out of Prussia by Frederick's father because of his supposed connection with the theory of predestination which permitted any giant who felt like it to desert from the Potsdam Guards) that right is greater than might, dwells continually upon the profound Rheinsberg peace "which is the only thing he seeks," and tells how for moments of genuine relaxation there is nothing like "having recourse to the sweet lyre which Apollo deigns to lend," by which he means that when not reading them his poetry he is entertaining his friends with his flute-playing.

Allusions to the pagan gods, to the muses, to Marcus Aurelius and Julian, abound in this correspondence of the philosopher-prince. With Virgil in mind Frederick takes up gardening. He calls his garden Amalthea, and speaks of it always in the Greek strain. When absent from Rheinsberg, he writes, "I am quite impatient to see again my vines, my cherries and my melons. There, in my beloved garden, free from all useless cares, I shall live entirely for myself."

How revealing of Frederick's character is this casual line in

a letter! To live entirely for himself — with what frankness the egoist in him speaks! But the phrase "free from all *useless* cares" is perhaps even more illuminating. For it shows the basic difference between father and son. Each stands out in history as a king paying close attention to the details of government. But where the father enjoys detail for its own sake, the son demands continual recognition and applause.

XXI

Of all contemporary men of thought Frederick most admired Voltaire. The Frenchman's prodigious energy in a sickly body, the extraordinary versatility of Voltaire's genius, which made him at one and the same time poet, wit, philosopher, playwright, scientist and reformer, which enabled him to compose inimitable verses while peeping at the planets through a telescope, and to think up classic themes for tragedies while attacking the abuses of the day in France — this semi-invalid's hugely productive nature, his intellectual daring manifested in rapier-pointed epigrams and brilliant lines directed against established authority, perhaps above all his *good taste,* made him unique to the young Prussian prince who so much wanted to be unique himself.

He saw many similarities in their lives and temperaments. Voltaire too had been misunderstood by a stupid father. Voltaire had been put in the Bastille, he had been put in Kustrin. Like Voltaire he had wanted to remain unmarried. Voltaire had changed his name from Arouet to Voltaire. The Prince-Royal of Prussia cannot go so far, but in letters to his friends Frederick has for some time past been dropping the "r" in his name, and signing himself "Fédéric."

XXII

It is Frederick who opens their correspondence. Voltaire is forty-two, Frederick twenty-four, when a few weeks after moving into Rheinsberg the Prince-Royal of Prussia sends off that first famous letter to Cirey expressing in extravagant terms his admiration for Voltaire's genius . . . begging Voltaire to honor him with his friendship . . . requesting the honor of being allowed to read any manuscripts that fear of persecution may have made Voltaire timid about publishing . . . and finally to show how utterly different he is from his intolerant father, enclosing as a present a volume of Wolff's philosophical writings which he praises highly, with the promise to forward another as soon as it is off the press.

This letter reaches Voltaire at a time when he is in very low spirits as a result of prolonged persecution. A virtual exile from Paris he lives in the country with Madame du Châtelet. — His own monarch, Louis the Fifteenth, speaks of him only with contempt, now here is a coming king who unbidden craves his friendship! — Voltaire writes back that it makes him very happy indeed "to know that there is in this world a prince who thinks like a man." Over Wolff, however, who seems to have obtained a head start towards gaining the Prince-Royal of Prussia's favor, Voltaire is not so enthusiastic. He thanks Frederick for Wolff's "little book," expresses himself as anxiously awaiting the arrival of Wolff's forthcoming work, *A Treatise on God, the Soul and the World,* declares that "the interest you appear to take, Monseigneur, in this learned man is a proof of your excellent discrimination and of your humanity," but privately wishes M. Wolff and his works to the devil.

XXIII

In the voluminous correspondence that follows Frederick never loses sight of the main idea — getting Voltaire to come to Prussia.

"Ah, may glory only make use of me to crown your successes!" is the oft-repeated cry. "For if I desire anything with ardor, it is to have learned and able men around me."

He tells him how he knows the *Henriade* by heart, and ranks it high above anything written by Homer or Virgil. He tells him how his picture is in the Rheinsberg library —

"It hangs over the book case which contains your works, and opposite to the place where I generally sit, that I may always have it in view."

He waxes indignant over the imbecility of a nation that can persecute such a man —

"I cannot recover from my astonishment when I think that a polished and enlightened nation like France does not know the treasure enclosed in its heart. What! Voltaire neglected in his own country and living solitary in the deserts of Champagne!"

Voltaire at his end of the line also says a few kind words, He declares that "Most princes fear to listen to the truth, but you will teach it." — Also that — "We go to Rome to see churches, pictures, ruins and bas-reliefs. A prince like yourself is far more deserving of a journey — you are a more marvellous rarity." — Still further that — "You think like Trajan, you write like Pliny, and you use French like our best writers. What a difference there is between men! Louis XIV was a great king. I respect his memory. But he did not speak so humanely as you, Monseigneur, and he did not express himself in the same way. I have seen his letters — he could not spell his own language. Under your auspices Berlin will be the Athens of Germany and perhaps of Europe. I shall think myself very

unfortunate if I die before I have seen the model of princes and the marvel of Europe."

Model of princes and marvel of Europe — worth going a long way to see! Hm! Frederick reads it over again.

But he is these days sending Voltaire specimens, many specimens, of his verses. His own orthography being not too good —

"Louis XIV," he reminds the Frenchman, "was a great prince in a vast number of ways. A solecism, a mistake in spelling cannot in the least tarnish the glitter of a reputation established by so many actions which have rendered him immortal. In every sense it was fitting for him to say: *Caesar est supra grammaticam.*"

Once Voltaire puts into words Frederick's secret longing to be King of France instead of Prussia. He writes, "Do you know, Monseigneur, that you are adored in France? You are looked upon as the young Solomon of the North. It is a pity you were not born to reign elsewhere."

In his letters to Voltaire from Rheinsberg Frederick denounces war passionately. He informs his correspondent that he is writing a book against it.

But actually the glamour of military conquest is very much with him. He may write that war is criminal, he may sit up late nights in that chair which faces Voltaire's picture, putting a polish on the fine humanitarian sentiments in his pacifist volume, the *Anti-Machiavelli,* but he is only awaiting the arrival of the moment. For the present he contents himself with instituting a chivalric order at Rheinsberg, called the Order of Bayard, its insignia a sword bent into a ring. To this order belong his friends and he has given them such names as *Le Chaste, Le Sobre, Le Gaillard* — he himself is *le Constant.* Their letters to one another always begin, "Brave knight, without fear and without reproach."

A Baron Bielfeld, who sees the Prince-Royal frequently at Rheinsberg, writes to a friend —

"He sacrifices now to Apollo and the Muses alone, but perhaps there will come a day when he will build altars to the God of War also."

And Frederick himself once says naively, in a letter to Voltaire —

"Your works shall never leave me. They shall be preserved as those of Aristotle were by Alexander."

XXIV

What does the father think of his son's way of life at Rheinsberg?

Periodically Frederick William has outbursts of anger, when he rages against the colony of French degenerates, as he calls them, which the Prince-Royal has planted in the heart of Prussia, bringing against Wolden and others the same charge that he brought against Keith and Katte.

Reports that Frederick has not abandoned that damnable theory of predestination, that he is now an atheist, that he does not drill his regiment but wastes the time instead writing French verses, looking at the sky through a telescope (Frederick, imitating Voltaire in everything, has built himself a physics laboratory and an astronomical tower at Rheinsberg), flute-playing, and in other such *wind-macherei,* cause him to make sudden descents upon Rheinsberg to see how much of all this is true and if the military duties are really being neglected.

Frederick — warned by friends — is always drilling away hard when the King tries to take him by surprise. "My regiment did wonders," he is thus able to write to Suhm. "The manual exercise — a little flour sprinkled on the heads of the

soldiers — men six feet high — and a good many recruits, have proved arguments stronger than those of my calumniators. All is quiet at present, and no more is said about religion, Wolden or my regiment."

He likes drill no better than he did, but he is too wise to seriously neglect it. Knowing his father's passion for anything he gets free, he sends him presents of fruit and vegetables, calves, turkeys, pigeons and tall recruits.

But there is another point that the King is dissatisfied on until he finally gives up hope. He not only writes himself to Frederick about it but he gets friends of Frederick to write also. Count Manteuffel, in answer to a letter from Frederick telling of his pleasant life at Rheinsberg, suggests, after envying him his good times — is it not about time the Princess-Royal was having a baby? Frederick replies —

"I thank you for your interest in my powers of propagation. In nine months the expected event may happen."

In nine months, that is always his answer.

Why all this fuss about an heir, he thinks? Here another fundamental difference between father and son becomes apparent. Frederick William, who calls himself despotic lord, worries about Prussia's future. Frederick, who will call himself the servant of the state, always uses Prussia primarily for furthering his own ambition.

"Kingdoms always find successors," he writes mockingly now, thinking of the recent scramble for Poland. "Has there ever been a case of a throne having remained empty?"

XXV

What interests him far more than a son is money.

It is in connection with the debts contracted by him as Prince-Royal at Rheinsberg that Frederick (between whom and

Madame du Châtelet the atmosphere is already strained, though he included with a keg of Tokay wine and his own picture taken by Keyserling to Voltaire, some amber knick-knacks for Voltaire's mistress) has his first tilt with another woman.

Prince Eugene was dead. Austria's finances, like her army, being now in complete confusion, Frederick's allowance from this quarter had ceased. He needed money badly. Not only was the allowance made him by his father insufficient for the life he led at Rheinsberg, but he had to pay out of his own pocket for all the recruits he sent the King.

The King of Prussia's mania for tall men had led to a regular traffic in giants. These were now marketable goods and found their way quickly to Potsdam from all quarters of Europe. Only too frequently unscrupulous middle-men stepped in and took most of the profit — a long-legged, gangling fellow from the country standing gaping at the town chimneys would be lured into an alley by promise of a drink, measured under some pretext, and if the commodity satisfied the standards of the Prussian agent, without delay knocked down, boxed and shipped. There were also, however, instances of wiser giants who sold themselves into captivity and sent the money home to their parents. In Prussia itself Frederick William was trying to develop a national product by forcing marriages between tall men and women, and especially between those with big feet, as he wanted his prize grenadiers to have not only height but also a good grip on the ground. Prices had gone up greatly in the last few years. A six-foot man only cost a thousand dollars, but such eight- and nine-foot prizes as "Jonas, the Norwegian Blacksmith," and "Kirkman, the Irish Giant," ran into far bigger money.

Frederick preferred, whenever possible, to use the kidnapping method. But from Ireland to Turkey, from the coast of

Africa to remotest Finland, tall men were now becoming shy about appearing out of doors. In a plaintive letter to Suhm Frederick says —

"Recruits are continually getting dearer — and I am obliged to buy them."

He writes this to Suhm, for it is through Suhm, at Petersburg, that his new Russian allowance comes.

The Empress Anne really gives it to him, since it is her lover, the Duke of Courland, who makes the remittances. Now, wishing to have the Prince-Royal of Prussia in her direct debt so that when he becomes King she may have the use of his army, she has Suhm instructed to answer that the duke cannot send the still larger remittance Frederick declares he simply has to have now that the price of tall men has become so prohibitive. Suhm accordingly writes —

"You may judge how anxious the Duke is to serve you by the great effort which he makes to do so, having himself the immense debts of his predecessors to discharge. He has, it is true, one great resource (the Empress). It is there, without doubt, that you must think of drawing from in future. She is very well disposed to this. She truly loves and esteems you, and will have great pleasure in rendering you service, persuaded as she is that persons who think alike and whose ideas are both noble may assist one another without any inconvenience being the result."

An invitation which by no means pleases the Prince whose pathological dislike for women is growing steadily more pronounced. Frederick — if he believed any woman capable of really noble ideas, which he does not — would still dislike. His own feminine vanity makes him jealous of outstanding women. He has never seen Madame du Châtelet but he hates her. Though he has really been accepting money for a long while from the Czarina and knows it, he replies haughtily

to Suhm — "I can be under obligation to a Duke, but not to an Empress!"

XXVI

In the summer of 1739, the year but one before his father's death, Frederick accompanied the King on a trip to Lithuania, the province which Frederick William's careful administration had lifted from destitution at the beginning of his reign to a state of prosperity which compared favorably with that of the most prosperous parts of the kingdom.

From this trip Frederick wrote back a long letter to Voltaire descriptive of the country he was now in, and telling with great detail how Lithuania, ravaged by the plague at the beginning of the eighteenth century — by which it had lost three hundred thousand inhabitants — and later neglected by his grandfather, was now entirely rebuilt and repopulated, had more fat cattle, more well-to-do peasants and more healthy little towns than any district in Germany.

"All these results," he concluded, "are due to my father alone, who not only issued the orders, but himself superintended their execution. He both conceived the plan, and carried it into effect — he spared neither toil, nor trouble, nor treasure, nor promises, nor rewards, to ensure the comfort and the existence of half a million of rational beings, who are indebted to him alone for their happiness and their establishment. There is something to my mind so heroic in the generous and laborious manner in which my father has devoted himself to the task of restoring to this desolate country its population, its fertility, and its prosperity, that I think you will view his conduct in the same light that I do when you are made acquainted with the circumstances."

Heroic! Can this be the son speaking of the father he hates? But Frederick is writing to Voltaire, and when he does so he

never reveals all that is in his heart. Besides a curious development is taking place in his character. He admires in others now what he wants to be admired in himself. This letter adumbrates his view of the great egoist as creator and destroyer both — destroyer in time of war, creator in time of peace. He sees something heroic in his father for restoring to desolate Lithuania its population, its fertility and its prosperity — he will see something equally heroic in himself when he reconstructs Prussia after the Seven Years War.

For the same reason, he likes to call attention to physical resemblances he has with heroes. Shortly after returning from Lithuania, on the subject of giants he writes to Cirey —

"Here they are all for great men — they measure merit by the yard, and it seems that anyone who has the misfortune to be born half a foot shorter than a giant, cannot have common sense. For my part I know not how it is, but according to what I have been told Alexander was not tall, nor Cæsar. The Prince de Condé, Turenne, Lord Marlborough and Prince Eugene, whom I have seen, who were all heroes, were less conspicuous physically than from that force of mind which finds resources in itself in dangers, and with exquisite judgment always turns them promptly to the best advantage."

Here Frederick is seen in open revolt against the physical standards of greatness set up by his father. He is below average height — a little man no one would give a second glance were he not the heir to a throne. But there is a strength more powerful and more to be dreaded than that of the brute and this he believes himself to possess.

As the King declines there may be noticed an increasing tendency in Frederick's letters to distinguished foreigners to dwell upon qualities of greatness in his father. How can this be reconciled with sentiments contained in other letters of the same period addressed to nearer friends which show that Frederick ac-

tually has no more affection for him now than he ever had? Out of his shame in being born son of a barbarous German prince is emerging family pride. The King will soon be dead — then the physical antagonisms which have kept them apart will be removed forever. Also Frederick, perhaps unconsciously, is seizing upon all aspects of Prussia and its rulers able to arouse the interest of the foreign intelligentsia.

He has the gratification of feeling that to some slight extent he has succeeded in bringing up his father. At the close of his life Frederick William begins to show a certain interest in the refinements he has always so despised. Confined by gout to his chair, he, for instance, takes up painting. True, he paints mostly monkeys and bears dressed up and caricatured to look like human beings, but still he paints. Having nothing else to do he reads. One day Frederick reports by letter to a friend the almost incredible fact that —

"The news of the day is that the King reads Wolff's philosophy for three hours daily. So we have at last arrived at the triumph of truth!"

XXVII

At night poring over maps. . . .

Here is Silesia to the south-east. But what a base from which Austria can at will penetrate into Brandenburg! Frederick's mind, which as the Prince de Ligne will notice so many years later, enjoys greatly making little excursions to Rome and Greece, immediately sees the classic comparison. Why, it is as if the Gauls had been allowed to keep fortified towns on the Italian side of the Alps. The Giant Mountains are Prussia's Alps, and Austria should possess no territory this side of them.

He looks up. His blue eyes are far away in thought. What will happen when the Emperor dies?

It will undoubtedly be the event of the century. How many of

the virtuous countries which have guaranteed Pragmatic Sanction will hesitate to fall upon and take away all they can from the young heiress? There will surely be a general scramble for the scattered possessions of the House of Hapsburg. But why during all these years should Austrian Hapsburgs have been the emperors of Germany? Was it not a Hohenzollern who in the first place put the crown upon the head of Rudolph?

Thoughts that wind in and out between the past and the future, the future and the past. . . .

Rome fell. The Holy Roman Empire must fall also. If, when it does, some determined monarch should bring under one control all these three hundred odd little courts of Germany. . . ?

Yes, Austria is ripe to fall. Her finances could not be in worse condition. Her army — Frederick's eyes sink to the map again, follow up the Oder past Frankfort, the last Brandenburg town, to Glogau, Liegnitz, Breslau, Brieg, Oppeln — her army in Silesia certainly cannot consist of more than a couple of regiments, and the cannon powder he has heard is so old and uncertain that it shoots backwards instead of forwards. It would take the Austrians six months or a year to get a real army together and send it across the mountains, while his own could be ready to march on a few weeks' notice.

His own? But fancy has outstripped fact. Is he King of Prussia yet? No, he is not. And the actual King of Prussia much prefers Austria dominating Europe than France — from sentimental reasons also, because in his youth he served under Eugene for a few weeks during the war of the Spanish Succession, he is far more liable to defend than to attack Maria Theresa. . . . But suppose his father should die before the Emperor? . . . That would be a curious fatality, but then does he not believe in fatalities? Then the army would be his, and he, as he was thinking . . .

Who suspects him of desiring military glory? Perhaps a few

of his Rheinsberg intimates, like Bielfeld, but with them it is only a conjecture. To Europe at large he is certainly the philosopher prince. As for the French they think that as soon as Frederick William dies all the good posts in Prussia will go to Frenchmen — that Versailles will thenceforth govern Berlin through its ambassador — that as long as the new philosopher king has his books and his flute he will be only too glad to leave to others the running of his country. Ah, but he is not so foolish as to mix up business and pleasure!

XXVIII

How the King clings to life!

This thought, through all Frederick's activities at Rheinsberg, is never absent. One — two — three — four — five years he lives on, always thought to be on the verge of death, always getting better.

Frederick has dark moments of doubt when he fears he may die before his father. The Prince-Royal suffers from headaches due to obstruction of the bowels, also from violent stomach cramps. He may praise his father's reconstruction of Lithuania to Voltaire as heroic, but the suspense of waiting for him to die becomes at times almost unbearable.

From Rheinsberg during the years of 1739 and '40 he is constantly being summoned to what is expected to be his father's deathbed. The King has gout, dropsy, apoplexy, and many other complications of diseases both inherited and acquired through over-indulgence in food, drink and temper. He has grown enormously fat, and his body is swollen by dropsy to well-nigh incredible demensions — he measures four yards around the waist. A traveller who makes a trip especially to Potsdam to see the King of Prussia is disappointed that he does not resemble his pictures —

"These give one the impression that he must have been good-looking in his youth, but it must be confessed there is nothing left him now. His eyes are fine, but their glance is terrible. His complexion is made up of the strongest tints of red, yellow, blue and green. The neck has quite vanished between the shoulders of the short enormous body."

For many months Frederick William has himself been expecting death. He has methodically made all funeral arrangements, tells just how much money is to be spent putting him away, designates the companies which are to fire volleys over his corpse, and inspects carefully the coffin lying ready for him in the palace.

Still death delays. . . . His subjects long for his death, for the compulsory military service has made Frederick William detested. . . . Foreign courts, especially Versailles, await it impatiently. Frederick nearing the age of thirty, sees, with every day the King lives, another twenty-four hours of his youth gone. . . . One day the King will seem ready to go, the next he hangs back. In years Frederick William is not old — what if he should linger on for another quarter of a century?

This thought dismays the Prince-Royal. His father live and the Emperor, Voltaire, die! What opportunities for acquiring Glory lost!

Nowadays Frederick can scarcely hold himself in control during his father's frequent outbreaks of bad temper under the pain of his accumulated ailments.

"He talks a great deal of godliness, but shows very little in his relations with his neighbors," he writes bitterly to Wilhelmine at Bayreuth.

Another one of these reports that the King is really dying, and to come quickly! Frederick hurries to Potsdam. As he approaches the palace his attention is attracted to a crowd on one

of the principal streets. There he sees his father, up and about in a wheel chair, superintending the laying of the foundation stone for a new building.

"My present state," writes Frederick to Voltaire on the twenty-sixth of February, 1740, "so oppresses my brain that I have nearly lost the faculty of thinking."

The very night he writes this, nervous indigestion so upsets his stomach that he expects to be dead before morning.

But May ends the suspense. This time when the son is called to Potsdam the father does really lie on his death-bed.

XXIX

They have long private interviews, and who will ever know what passes between them?

After the invasion it was only natural that stories should spring up on all sides concerning Frederick William's farewell advice to his successor.

There were people living a week's travel from Potsdam at the time — the prince of this, and electoral serenity of that — who had been standing at the bedside when the King, suddenly noticing their presence as he conferred behind closed doors secretly with the Prince-Royal, and wishing to make public knowledge the fact that he well knew the Emperor had in the past played him tricks, pointed to Frederick and shouted, "There stands one who will avenge me!" But it is more than doubtful that Frederick's father counselled him to attack Austria. What he unquestionably did say was that in the confusion that would necessarily follow upon the Emperor's death Frederick might advantageously offer the protection of the Prussian army to Maria Theresa in return for the rich province of Silesia upon which Prussia once had had some claims, long since given up because too difficult to make good.

Frederick himself never then or afterwards ever really tells anything. To Voltaire, burning up with curiosity to hear *details* of the King's last words, Frederick writes vaguely that — " he spoke to me for more than an hour on Friday the twenty-seventh of May on the internal and external affairs of the country, with extraordinary correctness of judgment," and that — " on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, entirely resigned to his fate, and bearing his sufferings with the greatest fortitude, he continued these conversations."

The King's closest friend at the time of his death was still the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau — Old Leopold with the gunpowder-colored face, inventor of iron ramrods, and with Frederick William joint creator of the Prussian army — who was as anti-French as he was pro-Austrian. What if, when Austria recently reduced its army a third, Anhalt-Dessau had recommended to Frederick William that the Prussian army be increased in size? Austria was bankrupt — Prussia had money. Leopold's subsequent actions showed that when he made this suggestion the last thought in his mind was that the army would be turned against Austria. Rather he was preparing to uphold Pragmatic Sanction with it on the Emperor's death.

It is very questionable also if such exclamations of the dying monarch as — " Is not God very good to me in giving me so excellent and worthy a son? " and — " Oh, my God, I die content since I have such a worthy son and successor! " have any basis in fact. Frederick William did not by any means see Frederick as the best of all possible sons and heirs. Also he does not die content. He hangs on to life till the last moment. " *Betet! betet!* — Pray! Pray! " he keeps urging his generals, thinking it was prayer which saved him when he fell ill during the Rhine campaign.

XXX

Early on Tuesday morning he abdicates in favor of the Prince-Royal. He makes some parting gifts to friends — gives the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau his best horse. He asks for a mirror, and looking at himself in it, says according to some ear-witnesses, "I thought I looked much worse," and according to others, "My God, do I really look as bad as *this!*"

His heart gets weaker. . . . The doctor, commanded to tell the truth, says he has at most only fifteen minutes to live. . . . The huge swollen monarch, still obstinate, raises his hand and wants to know how he can be so near to death when he finds no difficulty in opening and closing his fingers.

Frederick is at the bedside. The formal and insincere lamentations . . . ministers trying to pretend they are weeping, when in reality they are only blowing their noses, women wailing as soon as doors open, and whispering as soon as they shut . . . that hideously distorted face and enormous bloated body around which all the palace commotion centers . . . the humbug and cant of the lugubrious parsons who seem to be everywhere . . . how sordid and hypocritical it all seems to the young skeptic who has said, "O God — if there is a God — have mercy on my Soul — if there is a Soul."

Only Old Leopold, standing over there by the window, grim, gunpowder-faced, taciturn, looking down at the Schlossplatz, perhaps he truly grieves.

At noon the King dies. To Frederick all his father's hopeless provinciality is summed up in the answer he kept repeating to the clergyman who was exhorting him to repentance, and cataloging various possible sins —

"Yes, yes, but I have never been unfaithful to my wife!"

XXXI

Frederick William the First had ruled Prussia twenty-seven years. This man whose peculiar actions convinced Europe that he was partially if not wholly insane had received from his father a country which mismanagement and extravagance had made a miniature France under the Bourbons. He handed on a kingdom well administered, with a full treasury, and an army as large as Austria's.

The creation of the Prussian army was undoubtedly his biggest achievement. But that he should spend a lifetime perfecting a powerful military machine and then never use it had made him the butt of Europe's ridicule. As years went by and his gigantomania became more pronounced, the collecting of giants seemed indeed to have become the end in itself. But the real army was always there too, eighty thousand of the best drilled infantry in Europe, and the money for setting them in motion was there too — safely stored away down in the palace cellars, in those bending sacks of which Frederick had once spoken irreverently.

Rude, uncultured, masculine, carried away only too frequently by fits of overmastering passion, quick with his blows, Frederick William stands out historically as a creator. That there was a lust for destruction in him also is not to be denied, but it satisfied itself in such small-scale injuries as he could inflict with his own hands and feet. . . . He did not make wars. . . . He was a builder — in actual life there was nothing he liked more than to watch new houses going up, and to explain to the carpenters and bricklayers how badly they were doing their work.

His attitude towards the heir always harked back to his first disappointment. He had wanted a son as large and formidable as one of the big grenadiers, a mighty fellow with a huge laugh,

great hands and feet, and who, like Eckenberg, might even be able to hold a small cannon out at arm's length with a drummer-boy sitting on the end. Instead came this weakling, with his mincing, foppish manners!

Giants he could buy and kidnap, but he had wished to create one also — and he had failed.

Part Three

WHIRLWIND OF EVENTS

I

THE long wait is over. He is King. Now how will he behave?

Many people are sure they know the answer to this question.

His friends — particularly Keyserling, the favorite, called by Frederick, Cæsarion — count on being the real power behind the throne. Already courtiers are thronging to the Count soliciting favors. Jordan, Chasot, Bielfeld and Knobelsdorf, are equally certain of influential and lucrative positions. Keith — become a soldier of fortune in Spain — immediately starts for Prussia on hearing of Frederick's accession.

Over the Rhine flock French adventurers of all kinds who have been able to borrow travelling money on the security that under the new French-loving king their fortunes in Prussia will quickly be made.

The foreign courts picture to themselves a versifying, flute-playing young ruler, who will put up little resistance to the diplomats authorized to lead him by the nose. Austria counts on the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau running the government from now on. In France, old Cardinal Fleury sees with pleasure all that friendship and military aid which in the past the Hohenzollerns have given to the Hapsburgs now flowing into the lap of the Bourbons.

Voltaire, too.

Poet and philosopher Voltaire may be, but this has not stopped him from always wanting power. Now he sees his ambition of being adviser to an enlightened monarch actually within reach. Again and again he reads over that letter from Frederick, written almost as soon as he became King—

"My lot is changed. I have witnessed the last moments of a King, his agony, his death. On coming to the throne, I had no need of that lesson to be disgusted with the vanity of human grandeur. . . . We are not the masters of our fate, my dear Voltaire. We are borne along by the whirlwind of events and we must allow ourselves to be carried with them. I beg you will never see in me anything but a zealous citizen, a rather skeptical philosopher, and a really faithful friend. For God's sake, write to me as a man and, like me, scorn titles, names and all exterior pomp."

Splendid, hopeful words. But did he write them also to Wolff?

II

Frederick is fully conscious of the hopes and fears that center in his person.

For the first time in his life his sense of the dramatic is being satisfied. At last the so much talked-about father is no more, and the son has become the pivot around which Prussian affairs, and European curiosity, revolve.

He has come from behind the wings—silent and enigmatic he stands in the glare of the footlights—and a hush of expectancy lies over the audience. The first words, the initial gesture, how eagerly, not to miss them, all lean forward!

It all inflates while it feeds his wish to be *different,* to do the unexpected thing—the hunger for attention, recognition and applause which his father's harshness, acting on a temperament

with pronounced histrionic qualities, has sharpened into a ravenous appetite.

Does not Voltaire write —

"The world has lynx's eyes fixed upon my Solomon!"?

It is true. He knows it to be true. He revels in the knowledge.

He gives Keyserling and Chasot small unimportant military appointments. For Jordan he creates the post of *Inspector of the Poor,* so that he may draw a small salary. Keith, expecting at the very least to be ennobled and made a marshal, gets only a colonelship. "The day of his accession did indeed prove to be a day of disappointed expectations," woefully writes Bielfeld, who has only been made a secretary of legation.

He neither rewards nor punishes as expected. To the same extent that members of the Prince-Royal's party had based hopes on his accession, friends of the King had expected dismissal from their posts. Frederick announces that he has no intention of making any changes in his father's government — the only test shall be fitness for the job. As a symbol of his rule he institutes a new honor — the Order of Merit.

He declares religious intolerance to be at an end in Prussia.

"In this country everyone may go to heaven in his own way," is a saying of Frederick's which quickly makes the round of the European capitals.

Instead of burying his father cheaply according to Frederick William's instructions he gives him a splendid funeral. After the funeral he immediately disbands the world-famous regiment of Potsdam giants — a healthy sign of pacifism. But then in the very first month of his reign he writes to Voltaire —

"I began by increasing the forces of the state by sixteen battalions, five squadrons of hussars, and a squadron of bodyguards."

He abolishes torture in Prussia, proclaims the freedom of the press, orders corn from the public granaries to be distributed at

a nominal price to the poor still suffering from a hard winter, and also has game from the royal forests given to them.

But while advertising himself at home and abroad as the monarch who despises grandeur and glory — who looks upon himself not as the master but as the servant of the state — whose chief care shall always be "to make every one of my subjects contented and happy" — he is adding to the standards and colors of the army a black Roman eagle, carrying a sword in one claw and a sceptre in the other, and with the motto —

"For Glory and for our Country."

III

When Frederick came to the throne there was as much peace in Europe as there ever could be. But this was — and well he knew it — only the lull before the storm. How long it would last he could not foresee, but while it did last he was anxious to achieve Glory as a patron of the arts and sciences.

"I have laid the foundations of our new Academy," the young King of Prussia wrote to Voltaire from Charlottenbourg, on the twenty-seventh of June, less than a month after coming to the throne. "I have acquired Wolff, Maupertuis, Vaucanson and Algarotti. I am awaiting replies from Gravesande and Euler. I have established a new college for commerce and manufactures. I am engaging painters and sculptors."

All these men he was now inviting to Prussia Frederick had corresponded with from Rheinsberg, and most of them had been suggested to him by Voltaire. None showed backwardness in accepting the royal invitation except the man he most wanted to have.

Frederick's correspondence with Voltaire since the first effusion in 1735 had included an exchange of several hundred letters. In these letters Frederick placed himself always in the

position of an ignorant but willing pupil kneeling at the feet of the master. But though he did genuinely admire Voltaire, his main idea in bringing the Frenchman to Prussia was to make use of him. Voltaire he felt had that baffling and elusive thing which all Germans lacked — good tone, good taste. Frederick's mania for writing maudlin French verses was rapidly becoming as great as his father's had been for collecting giants — the pupil was secretly ambitious to compete with the " master." He felt also that under Voltaire's tutelage he too could become a giant in every field of intellectual endeavor — and that then, being a king, and therefore a potential Man of Action also, he would be a Voltaire *plus!* At the same time he was looking forward in another way. He had not forgotten that Voltaire wrote history as well as poetry and plays. Would not Voltaire be useful as a publicity man for posterity? Frederick would make the history — Voltaire, properly instructed, could then write about it.

Voltaire would not come. Frederick rightly guessed that it was his mistress who was holding him back. Either she came with him or he did not come at all — and if the divine Emilie, as Frederick sarcastically called Madame du Châtelet, came, it meant that her husband the Marquis would have to be given some kind of appointment at the King of Prussia's court. This appointment Frederick would not give. He did not want the du Châtelets — he only wanted Voltaire. When Voltaire and his mistress arranged to pay him a visit shortly after his accession he threw off his mask of politeness and showed his real hostility.

" To speak frankly about your journey," he wrote from Berlin on the second of August, " it is you, it is my friend that I wish to see — the divine Emilie, with all her divinity, is only an accessory to the Newtonized Apollo."

Only an accessory! Voltaire's tall, bony, intellectual mistress

had already penetrated the flattery in Frederick's letters to Voltaire and seen the jealousy, the intense dislike of herself beneath. She became the more determined not to let Voltaire go without her and she seemed to have triumphed when Frederick finally agreed to pay them a visit at Brussels, where Voltaire had gone with her to settle a law-suit. But at the last moment by feigning a serious illness the King of Prussia induced Voltaire to make a hurried trip to Cleves to see him alone.

Realizing well the importance of first impressions, Frederick had arranged his setting with care so that he would be in character as philosopher-king scornful of human vanities. Voltaire found him at the old castle of Moyland lying on a small truckle bed in a bare room lit by one lone stump of a candle. Improperly protected against the damp draughty air of the castle by a single thin coarse blanket, Frederick was tossing about in a fever. An hour afterwards the fit of quartan ague which had prevented him from going to Brussels had subsided sufficiently for him to be up for supper.

IV

From this interview — which lasted three days — each went away full of its historic importance.

Frederick was still an obscure German king, but he so firmly believed himself cut out for a glorious future that he saw the castle of Moyland immortalized by the presence in it at one and the same time of himself and Voltaire. He liked the privilege of having a view of Voltaire's writings prior to publication or performance, and at Moyland Voltaire had read to him the beginning of his new play, *Mahomet,* attacking religious intolerance. Frederick made arrangements to have Voltaire get him some opera singers. They talked about the King's

Anti-Machiavelli, the publication of which Voltaire was to supervise at the Hague.

Neither could praise the other sufficiently afterwards.

"It needed an effort of memory to recollect that the man who sat on the foot of my bed talking to me was a sovereign who had an army of a hundred thousand men," wrote Voltaire.

"I have seen that Voltaire whom I was so curious to know," wrote Frederick. "He has the eloquence of Cicero, the mildness of Pliny, the wisdom of Agrippa — he combines in short all the virtues and talents of the three greatest men of Antiquity. Du Châtelet is lucky to have him, for of the good things he flings out at random a person who had no faculty but memory might make a brilliant book."

Frederick, anxious to excel in such departments himself, was genuinely impressed by Voltaire's powers as a brilliant and witty conversationalist. But his personality otherwise had been a disappointment. This skin-and-bone old Frenchman with his brilliant carbuncle eyes and sardonic toothless mouth — who bowed and scraped more like an ambitious courtier than an independent-minded philosopher, but who had such a penetrating glance — was altogether too inquisitive about politics. From uplifting generalities about human behavior and the crime of war he had persistently tried to lead the conversation into just the channel which Frederick wanted to avoid — Prussia's future relations with Austria and France. Frederick, off to Greece and Rome, found Voltaire steering the boat towards Pragmatic Sanction.

The two men — the king and the poet — had too many qualities of vanity in common. They might agree by mail, but in the flesh they must necessarily be antagonistic, just as Frederick could now see the good in his father while the physical memory remained repellent. Frederick guessed that Voltaire, a great egoist himself, saw through his mask of humility, of

philosophic pretensions, to the ambitious king beneath, solely desireful of personal Glory.

But all Frederick's peace-time activities having to do with the arts and sciences, and the importation of men with reputations — his caressing of Voltaire — were merely supplying an interlude. A modest fame might come from them, but he had far more ambitious plans. Suddenly his interest in opera singers, in Voltaire's *Mahomet,* drops clean away. On the twenty-sixth of October he had written to Voltaire,

"A most unforeseen event prevents me from opening my heart to you as usual and from chattering as I should wish. *The Emperor is dead.*"

V

Within six months of his accession it has happened!

Who can tell him now that he is not a man of destiny? No sooner has he mounted the throne of Prussia, scarcely has that army and that well-filled treasury become his, when the mysterious wheels controlling the future begin spinning towards the event of paramount importance in the first half of the eighteenth century — the death (from eating too large a plateful of mushrooms) of the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

The blue-eyed young King of Prussia writes to his friend the poet telling him that he can forget about the actresses.

"The death of the Emperor alters all my pacific ideas. I think that in June it will be rather a matter of cannon-powder, soldiers, and trenches than of actresses, balls and stages. . . . Now is the moment for a complete change in the old political system. . . . It is that falling rock striking the idol of four metals seen by Nebuchadnezzar which destroyed them all."

The eyes of Europe, on the twenty-eight-year-old King of Prussia since his accession, are switching to the twenty-three-

year-old Maria Theresa in Vienna. But in the drama that he knows must soon begin, Frederick is determined to continue playing the leading rôle.

Will the other countries hold back — show scruples about falling upon the young Queen of Hungary? Never for a moment does he believe it! But while they deliberate, while they hesitate, he will *act.* — Move first! that shall be his policy. — And when to the ministers and generals shocked at his decision to invade Silesia Frederick says that it would be better if the Queen of Hungary had fewer documents to prove her rights of inheritance and more soldiers, is he not only repeating just what Prince Eugene said?

To command his troops under him he chooses not the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau, but General Schwerin, the officer who had most befriended him at the time of his court-martial. Frederick William's old stand-by, the inventor of the iron ramrod, and the man after Frederick William most responsible for the drill efficiency of the Prussian infantry, has already since the accession been reprimanded by Frederick for seeming to think that his advice is necessary on all occasions. Now when Old Leopold mutters in a letter something about inexperience, rashness of youth, Frederick replies sharply —

"I have received your letter, and seen with what inquietude you view the approaching march of my troops. I hope you will set your mind at ease on that score, and wait with patience what I intend with them and you. I have made all my dispositions, and your Serenity will learn, time enough, what my orders are, without disquieting yourself about them, as nothing has been forgotten or delayed."

Then as Leopold takes a more humble and plaintive tone, cannot understand why faithful old generals should be given no employment in this emergency, Frederick tells him he shall have work, but in Brandenburg keeping watch on Saxony.

"As to the present expedition I reserve it for myself alone, that the world may not think that the King of Prussia marches to the field with a tutor."

VI

Secret preparations for the invasion.

To Algarotti in Italy Frederick writes, "Such a trifle as the death of the Emperor demands no great efforts. Everything has been foreseen, everything prepared, so there is nothing to do but to carry into execution those plans which I have long been revolving in my head."

The point of concentration for Prussian troops is Frankfort-on-the-Oder in south-eastern Brandenburg, and close to the Silesian frontier. Supply trains and columns of infantry begin to move from Berlin towards Frankfort. But to avert suspicion Frederick also has troops marching in the opposite direction towards Hanover.

Feeling himself the man of the moment Frederick takes keen pleasure in fencing with the foreign envoys all of whom are eager to ferret out his plans. But he has moments of irritability. The cost of the war is one of the arguments against it brought forward by the cautious older men, and Voltaire, a second time his guest, this time at Rheinsberg, where the King of Prussia is hiding his meditated invasion beneath a round of gaieties, turns in, when he leaves, too large an expense account.

"Each of the six days the miser was here cost me five hundred and fifty dollars," exclaims Frederick angrily to Jordan. "Certainly no court fool of a great personage ever got such pay!"

Moments of irritability, accumulating, bring a reaction. The head-shakings, the warnings that when he invades Silesia he will surely start something he cannot finish, begin to shake his confidence . . . Russia not Austria is the real menace. . . .

Both the Empress and the Duke of Courland are known to be friendly towards Vienna. Will an invasion of Silesia mean hordes of Cossacks invading East Prussia?

A courier arrives from St. Petersburg with the news that the Czarina Anne has just died.

VII

It cannot be chance! The death of the Czarina coming so close upon that of the Emperor makes all Frederick's doubts vanish. Verily destiny, not himself — that whirlwind of events against which it is useless to struggle — bears him on to this invasion of Silesia.

Quickly he acts on the information. The Russian heir is a child — little Ivan — the Czarina before her death had appointed the Duke of Courland regent. The Duke has never been popular, beyond doubt Count Munnich will now seize the reins of power. But Munnich's wife's daughter is married to Major Winterfield, one of the King of Prussia's officers. Frederick immediately sends Winterfeld to Petersburg. By the 27th of December he has concluded a treaty with Russia.

What is Vienna doing? Vienna has been informed of the Prussian troop movements towards the Silesian frontier, but as Frederick had expected the pompous hidebound old Austrian counsellors pay no attention. Vienna even denies pointblank the information sent it by its own minister in Berlin. Vienna so utterly scorns the King of Prussia as a feudal vassal that attack from this quarter would be a violation of a law of nature.

Di Botta, the Austrian unofficial agent, sent finally to examine into the preposterous contents of these rumors, travels from Vienna to Berlin by way of Silesia. He describes the terrible condition of the roads to Frederick — a gentle hint to the King of

Prussia that no army could ever make headway on them. Frederick takes a pinch of snuff and says lightly —

" Well then, the worst that could happen to a traveler would be getting a little splashed with mud."

When concealment is no longer necessary he tells everything. The professional Italian diplomat representing Austria exclaims solemnly —

" Sire, you may perhaps ruin the House of Austria, but yourself you will ruin to a certainty."

A shrug, signifying complete lack of responsibility. All depends on the good sense of the Queen of Hungary. If she accepts his terms there will certainly be no war. When Di Botta, trying to overawe the young King of Prussia with the reputation of the Austrian army under Eugene, says, " Your troops are fine, it is true. Ours do not look so well, but they have stood fire " — a suggestion that lined up against the Austrian veterans they will be only props for fine uniforms — Frederick answers, with a swagger —

" You think my troops fine. I will make you acknowledge them brave."

He knows Austria will never accept his terms. He has followed his father's advice about offering his army to Maria Theresa to defend her from attack, in return for which he expects Silesia, but he has gone about doing so in his own way. Before his messenger reaches Vienna with the King of Prussia's generous offer of an army, two millions of florins, and the promise to vote for Maria Theresa's husband, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, at the coming election for emperor, that army will be in Silesia. He knows that Austria will never submit to the humiliation of being dictated to in this manner.

VIII

On the verge of crossing the Rubicon, a harangue, in the Cæsarian manner, to his officers.

"Gentlemen, I am undertaking a war, in which I have no allies but your valor and your goodwill. My cause is just, my resources are what we ourselves can do, and the issue lies with Fortune. Remember continually the glory which your ancestors acquired on the plains of Warsaw, at Fehrbellin, and in the expedition to Prussia. Your lot is in your own hands — distinctions and rewards wait upon the fine actions which shall merit them.

"But what need have I to excite you to Glory? . . . It is the one thing you keep before your eyes, the sole object worthy of your labors. . . . We are going to front troops, who under Prince Eugene had the highest reputation. . . . Though Prince Eugene is gone, we shall have to measure our strength against brave soldiers — the greater will be the honor if we can conquer. . . . Adieu — go forth — I will follow you straightway to the rendezvous of Glory which awaits us!"

They leave for Frankfort, he remains in Berlin another few days. To Voltaire, in a letter written shortly after the border is crossed, and descriptive of the thousand-and-one troublesome details which crowd his new life, Frederick states frankly his chief reason for invading Silesia.

"Such are my occupations, which I would gladly abandon to another, did not the phantom Glory so often appear to me. It is indeed a great folly, but one a man cannot get rid of when he is once possessed of it."

At Versailles, when he hears of it, Bourbon Louis XV turns over in bed and says to his mistress —

"The man is mad."

IX

The Prussian army, thirty thousand strong, and marching thirty miles a day, crossed the Brandenburg border into Silesia in four columns on Friday, the sixteenth of December 1740. General Schwerin commanded under the King. The route to be followed lay up the valley of the Oder, for along this the Austrian forts were scattered. Breslau, the capital, was a hundred miles away up the river. In the opposite direction, on the Brandenburg side, fifty miles downstream, lay Kustrin, where Frederick had been confined and from which his eye used to follow the Oder in its windings down the plain from Silesia.

Three hundred miles to the south, on the far side of the Giant Mountains, lay Vienna.

The plain of Brandenburg behind — the mountains of Silesia ahead! Into those mountains the Austrian hussars who watched the Prussian troop concentration across the border have galloped and vanished. . . . Column upon column the blue-coated Prussians advance. . . . Contemplating this array of men, who move, who stop, at his command, Frederick feels a surge of power. From high points he watches . . . gets panoramic views of his army winding along beside the Oder . . . lets his pupils absorb the compact masses of infantry, the cavalry squadrons, the artillery and the supply wagons — listens to the guttural shouts of the officers, the clatter of harness and rumbling of wheels. Then his gaze will shift to the direction of the mountains.

The colossal events unfolded by history since then have made that Prussian invasion of Silesia in the winter of 1740–41 a dim and distant thing — the very shadow of a fact remote and inconsequential — but how it staggered Europe of the day! — The Elector of Brandenburg dares to make war on the great Austrian Hapsburgs! — The Prussian army, which the big

European nations all coveted as an ally but never thought of as capable of holding its own against the resources of a first-class power, is led by its young King in person against the power which for centuries has dominated Europe! — Well might the officers, as well as the men in the ranks, read as ominous portents the dropping of a church bell from its steeple in Crossen on the day when the invasion commenced, the thunder which began to growl on the third day, the torrents of rain which now fell for a week. And well might Frederick himself feel a great iconoclast, hurling down old idols and fetishes, as he struck this blow at the prestige of the Austrian bureaucracy.

As King of Prussia Frederick's reactions towards Austria politically were much what they had been to his father as held-down son. Austria — until its might was shattered — would always rap him on the head when he tried to be anything but the Elector of Brandenburg. It would always want to order him around. This invasion of Silesia, therefore, was very much as if Frederick had one day dared to turn the tables on his father, snatching at the King's hair and nose instead of patiently allowing his own to be snatched at.

X

As soon as the Prussians crossed the frontier the usual thing in such cases happened. They distributed handbills and pasted up notices on churches, saying they had come not as foes, but as friends.

Frederick made a point of being polite to everybody. He invited deputations to dinner, granted favors. He hoped to win the goodwill of the large number of Protestants in Silesia, in the past subject to persecution by the Catholic majority.

There was, as he had made sure beforehand, no Austrian army in Silesia to oppose his advance. The few fortresses like

Glogau, which he could not take possession of right away, he simply left behind him under guard. . . . The Prussian army advanced and took possession of Breslau. . . . It moved south and threw a besieging force around Neisse, the strongest and southernmost fortress town. . . . On the fourteenth of January, less than a month after the start, Frederick, in the mocking manner that he strenuously cultivated in his letters to friends who were also dependents, wrote to Jordan —

"My dear Monsieur Jordan, my sweet Monsieur Jordan, my quiet Monsieur Jordan, my good, my benign, my pacific, my humanest Monsieur Jordan — I announce to thy Serenity the conquest of Silesia."

And to Algarotti, three days later, he adds —

"The whole conquest has cost me only two officers and twenty men."

XI

Could Alexander have done it quicker? — But what is Vienna thinking?

Those mud-splashed riders who disappeared into the Giant Mountains galloping madly through the passes, have emerged upon the plains of Moravia, have arrived at the great capital. But their news — which seemed to them so important that they nearly killed themselves and their horses carrying it — is not taken very seriously.

Vienna is indignant but not afraid. That Prussia, the one country on which the Emperor thought he could depend without fail to uphold Pragmatic Sanction, should be the first to violate it, comes so close to sacrilege as to be amusing. Vienna makes jokes about the upstart young King of Prussia — it reminds the world that this bold invader is none other than the elector whose duty at imperial ceremonies is to hold the basin in which the Emperor washes his hands. It sends to its two

commanding officers in Silesia, Wallis and Browne (both descended from foreign soldiers of fortune who entered the Austrian service), not men and equipment, but impossible orders to chase the imperial valet and his rabble out of Austrian territory — and be prompt about it. If this fails and the winter does not destroy the Prussian army, spring will be time enough to think of sending reinforcements over the mountains.

As Frederick had expected, the young Empress Maria Theresa, a true Hapsburg in her pride, turns down indignantly the terms submitted to her by the Prussian envoy. Is the Elector of Brandenburg to propose this and that to the daughter of Emperor Charles? She can do well without both his men and his money if the price paid for them must be swallowing such an insult as relinquishing Silesia.

Frederick is more interested in what the rest of Europe thinks. Despite his frequent assertions that he cares nothing for public opinion, he wants to have it with him. In Berlin, by his orders, a celebrated Prussian jurist gets busy fitting together data which will justify the invasion by those past, long-since abandoned claims to Silesia of the Hohenzollern family. Frederick awaits Voltaire's letters eagerly, and is angry when he thinks that Voltaire sees him as in the wrong. — How does the philosopher king of Prussia justify this war he has started with the noble pacifist sentiments expressed in the Anti-Machiavelli book denouncing war? — But Frederick divides life into two distinct realms, thought and action. What he expresses in the one, he feels himself by no means obligated to perform in the other.

He knows he is destined for great deeds — and that for him is the end of the matter. At the head of his bodyguard, when he entered Silesia, was carried a Roman eagle. He has harangued his soldiers as Cæsar did. He sees a comparison between the Prussian army and the Roman in that the major unit in both is

the foot soldier. . . . Projects for conquests, still vague but which far transcend this immediate invasion of Silesia, which in their very vagueness allure and dazzle as does the word Glory on the printed page, are swirling in his imagination.

Certainly the ease with which he has penetrated two hundred miles into Austrian territory intoxicates Frederick during these first few weeks of the invasion. Certainly also he sees himself not as a Brandenburg prince, but in the light of one of the heroes.

"Be my Cicero in defending my enterprise," he writes to Jordan, "and in its execution I will be your Cæsar."

XII

But remembering the conspiracies hatched against Roman Cæsars when away on their military campaigns, he hurries back to Berlin at the close of January.

Thus far there has been no battle of any importance. The rear guard of ten thousand has left Berlin so that now he has forty thousand troops in, or within quick marching distance, of Silesia. But no Austrian army has yet crossed the mountains.

He returns nevertheless as a conqueror, for like Cæsar, the young King of Prussia, under a cloak of modesty, expects his friends at all times to drum up admiration and applause. But the conqueror of Silesia knows that his fate lies in the future — more than likely in the first big battle. If he loses, Austrian prestige will sweep everything before it. His own generals, so many of them now against the war, may mutiny. But if he wins the psychological effect will be equally great in his favor.

Chance is kind to Frederick. Many of the older generals, like the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau, have pro-Austrian sympathies, but like Frederick William dislike England. Now it seems that if a general war breaks out, England will be the only country

helping Austria. Frederick accordingly gives Old Leopold command of the army which if England enters the war shall invade Hanover. He flatters the old general by describing how splendidly the Prussian infantry marched through the mud and water — at some points in Silesia more than waist-deep — attributes their splendid morale wholly to the discipline inculcated by Leopold. While in Berlin he raises more troops for the army in Silesia.

When he returns to Silesia it is noticed immediately that he makes the harsh discipline even sterner. Was not the Roman legionary disciplined to the point where he would die rather than disobey an order or quit his post? The Prussian army, Prussia itself, is too young for patriotism to exist, but fear will do as well for the present — floggings, always plentiful in the Prussian army, are more numerous after Frederick's return.

XIII

During Frederick's absence a change imperceptible at first but very real has taken place in Silesia.

Where the mountain outlines were once bare and deserted, showing no human presence, now savage horsemen are seen. These wild long-haired riders, who hang upon the outskirts of the Prussian camps, who swoop down upon supply trains from the jagged peaks and intercept messengers, are the Pandours, Hungarian irregular cavalry recruited from the mountain tribes. Shortly after Frederick's return in February a band of this primitive cavalry almost takes him prisoner.

The Pandours thicken. . . . Maria Theresa has appealed to her Hungarian nobles and these wild horsemen are the reply. . . . But on the far side of the mountains there is activity also. At Olmutz in Moravia Austrian troops are being concentrated for a great spring offensive.

But now no scouts or messengers are able to get anywhere on account of the Pandours. A sense of uneasiness grows in Frederick. . . . Can a comparison be seen between these irregular horsemen and the mounted Gauls under Vercingetorix who used to cut off the communications of the Romans? . . . Schwerin thus far has commanded one part of the army — Frederick now for safety unites the two divisions into a single army.

Rumors of a big Austrian army approaching — but no details of where it is. . . . The Prussian army has lost its eyes. . . . Grows, grows that sense of uneasiness. . . . Somewhere an army as large as his own is marching to give him battle. . . . But from which direction will it come?

For a time Frederick had known its approximate location but now he has lost all contact with the Austrians. They were marching north to relieve Neisse. Through the cold bleak mountains Frederick wanders around looking for his first battle. On the seventh of April, in the middle of a blinding blizzard (for the winter is staying late), groping his way forward, he puts out his hand — shrinks suddenly back, catches his breath — for there — he almost touched it! — lies the ENEMY!

XIV

Tomorrow will tell him his fate. All his life he has been moving towards the battle which cannot be evaded then — in twenty-four hours he will know his destiny.

The two armies — the Austrian and the Prussian — are about equal numerically. Frederick has the most infantry, old Count Neipperg, who commands the Austrians, the most cavalry.

Snow is falling. . . . Frederick, the King who sets reason above all else, believes in omens. When the bell fell from the steeple at Crossen he interpreted it favorably like Cæsar did

when he stumbled, upon landing in Africa — it meant for him the downfall of the mighty, the doom of the house of Hapsburg. Now he tries to read his future in the fact that his first big battle will be fought in a snowstorm.

The death of the Emperor so shortly after the death of his father — the death of the Czarina so shortly after the death of the Emperor — his recent escape from capture by the Pandours — can all these really be mere chance? Surely a fatality links them together, the fatality of the immortal name it is decreed he shall win as a warrior.

Yes, less than a year ago he ascended the throne of Prussia. That was predestined. Less than six months ago he was crossing from Brandenburg with his army into Silesia. That too was predestined. Today he sits in his tent writing letters to relatives and friends — eons ago in the past the inscrutable hand of fate placed him just here at this moment. Tomorrow — ?

"Tomorrow," he writes to Jordan, "we shall fight. You know the fortune of arms. No more respect is paid to the life of a king than to the life of a subject. If there is an end to my career remember a friend who always loved you dearly. If Heaven prolongs my life I will write to you tomorrow and you shall learn that we have conquered."

XV

On the day of the battle of Mollwitz the snow lay thick upon the ground. The Austrian army lay scattered through three villages — Gruningen, Hunernand and Mollwitz — the general's headquarters being in the last. Frederick's headquarters were on the plain not half a mile away.

Frederick was twenty-eight, and ignorant of war. The Austrian commander, Count Neipperg, was a veteran of many campaigns. But like Prince Eugene when Frederick saw him

on the Rhine, though he had a great reputation, Count Neipperg was now in his dotage. Had a younger, more resolute general — Browne or Wallis — commanded at Mollwitz Frederick's future might have been very different.

The Count knew the Prussians were somewhere in the general vicinity, but he did not know, and he does not seem to have cared, where. Incredible as it seems, he allowed Frederick, himself floundering around lost, to take him by surprise. He was having his dinner when they brought him the news that the Prussian army was marching to the attack. Gorged with wine and food, he fell back speechless with amazement and indignation, quite incapable of giving orders. Subordinate officers took upon themselves the responsibility of getting the scattered and carousing Austrian army into some sort of shape for defense. Even then, so thoroughly had the supercilious feeling of superiority spread down from the commander to his troops, as the Austrian soldiers formed into ranks they called out to the cooks to keep their soup hot as it would only take them a few minutes to have the Prussians running back the way they were coming.

Had Frederick employed at Mollwitz his later tactics of swift and sudden attack, so complete was this confusion of the Austrian army when he appeared, that he could have routed it with scarcely a battle. But after worrying himself nearly sick over military details — ordering the left wing to do this, the right wing to do that, and the center to do something different, — he failed to attack at dawn as he might have done, but waited until two in the afternoon, when the Prussian army advanced to the attack certainly not in the rapid stealthy manner of Cæsar's legions, but more in the grand slow manner of Pompey, only lacking the elephants to complete the comparison, for all the bands were playing as though on parade.

The Austrians had time to do something. Their cavalry charged and Frederick saw his own giving way. To his horror

Maria Theresa

he noticed the confusion among his hussars spreading. They too were charging — but many of them in the wrong direction. Vainly the officers tried to rally them, to point them the right way — vainly Frederick himself galloped about trying by his presence to inspire confidence. The Prussian cavalry, never given much attention by Frederick William, who always favored his beloved infantry, proved no match for the Austrian, and soon was in full flight.

Frederick himself became panic-stricken. He lost his head, gave and took back orders, behaved in a manner so obviously distraught that Schwerin commanding under him realized that if the battle was not lost already the King's continued presence on the battlefield would certainly cause it to be. Mollwitz lay south of the Oder — if the Austrians were victorious the King of Prussia himself might be taken prisoner. Schwerin persuaded Frederick to leave before it was too late, to ride to Oppeln where there was a bridge, and get across the river there.

XVI

That terrible ride through the night — ah, will he ever forget it!

Away from that valley of red trampled snow, with its dead and its dying, its human yells and shrieks, the deep bellow of cannon, the screams of wounded horses, all that bloody and hideous uproar which spells for him in huge dripping letters failure, defeat, the derision of Europe, the beginning and the end of his Glory.

Frederick leaves the battlefield of Mollwitz almost unaccompanied late in the afternoon. After his departure Schwerin sends a detachment of cavalry to serve as a royal bodyguard, but the King rides so fast they never catch up with him.

The white landscape rushes by. The spinning earth turns

other lands, other peoples, to the warm sun — now only the cold pale glow of the snow remains. It is night, and through the darkness of it he rides, this defeated young King, the head that used to incline to the left like Alexander's, but now from playing the flute inclines to the right, sunk despondently between his shoulders. Can it be he is really awake, and not in the grip of some foul nightmare. — Defeat! — A cry of despair escapes his lips. But there streaming through the darkness behind him he sees it in fancy — his army in full flight after him! Those dragoons of Schulenberg that first gave way — why, why were they predestined to do so? This army, this mockery of an army, bequeathed him by his drill-crazed father, and which at its first trial has brought upon him only ignominy and shame!

Austrian jeers ring in his ears. What a smile will curl the scornful lips of the haughty young archduchess who calls him "bad man" and "feudal vassal"! And in France — Frederick groans. "The man is mad," said the sensual Bourbon — what will he say now! Certainly caricatures of the little German prince who tried to be Cæsar and failed will appear in all the foreign papers. Defeat he might be able to survive but mockery never!

Bitter is the cup but not yet has he drunk it to the dregs. Arriving at Oppeln, which should be garrisoned by Prussians, he finds the Austrians in possession of the town. — The bridge is theirs — he cannot cross. — With visions of himself wasting away in an Austrian prison Frederick breaks down completely, sobs, gesticulates, moans like a hysterical woman.

Where shall he conceal himself? Accompanied by the three officers who left the battlefield with him Frederick seeks shelter in a flour mill.

Here, in the morning, the aide-de-camp despatched by Schwerin to announce to the King that the Prussians have won a great victory, finds him.

XVII

So it is not defeat but victory!

The battle of Mollwitz was won not by Frederick, but by Schwerin and his father's infantry. Again and again after the King's departure, the Austrian cavalry had charged the Prussian infantry, but was unable to break their lines. Through the confusion caused by the Prussian fleeing cavalry, against the terrific shock of the Austrian charges, these strange mechanical men stood their ground, firing with the aid of their iron ramrods five shots to the minute against the three of the Austrians. Just as the sun was sinking they made their advance.

"Never in my life," tells afterwards an Austrian officer, who saw this advance, "have I seen a finer sight. . . . The Prussians advanced in astonishing order after the terrible ordeal they had been through all afternoon. . . . Their ranks and lines were as close and moved with as much regularity as though they were on the parade ground. . . . Their glistening arms shone in the last rays of the sun, and they fired so rapidly and simultaneously that it resembled thunder."

The Austrian infantry, using wooden ramrods, could only fire three shots to the minute. They had not been trained either, as Frederick William had trained his grenadiers at Potsdam — "to load their weapons with the utmost rapidity, to advance in close ranks, to take good aim, to see clearly in the midst of fire, and to do all this in the most profound silence." When they saw what was advancing towards them, they stepped back.

A victory for the Prussians, but the losses in men about equal — seven thousand to a side. The Prussian Guard, against which the Austrian cavalry had directed its most furious charges — thinking the King to be in the center — has lost half its officers and three fourths of its men. *No more respect is paid*

to the life of a king than to the life of a subject! Again and again, while Frederick was riding away towards Oppeln, these peasant boys, dragged away from their families to wear the Prussian uniform, flogged into a grim and terrible obedience, had closed up their ranks as the dead fell, and with bloody fingers reloaded their muskets.

Frederick rode out to look over the battlefield. Still littered with the dead and dying, it could not now with its realism keep down the jubilation in his heart. "My God, what a misfortune has befallen you!" he says to young Fitzgerald, one of many followers of the lost cause of the Stuarts serving in foreign armies, and a favorite captain in his Guard, who lies dying with both legs shattered by a cannonball. Misfortune is the word he uses. Fitzgerald thanks the King for his sympathy. "May your Majesty live and be prosperous. It is all over with me," whispers the dying young Irishman. Knobelsdorf, who remodelled Rheinsberg for Frederick, has been killed. Old Schulenberg, whose dragoons first gave way, also lies dead. Schwerin has a wound.

Never will Frederick quite forgive this general for advising him to leave the battlefield. In his letter to Prince Leopold telling of the victory he omits to mention the name of the man who won it for him in his absence. "I have to thank Bollmer's and Winterfeld's grenadier battalions, the first battalion of my regiment and Kleist's regiment for the victory. But all my infantry did well. On the other hand the greatest part of my cavalry behaved like cowards."

Frederick can see the sordidness of war objectively when he writes about it, he can philosophize upon its futility and strip it of its glamour, but that glamour if false still exists for him. From the battlefield of Mollwitz he sends Voltaire an account of the victory written in French verse, and turning the spotlight upon his own versatility, comments —

"You see the lyre of Horace has its turn after the club of Hercules."

XVIII

There is sarcasm in Voltaire's reply.

"To write verses and good verses after a victory is unique," he agrees, "and therefore it is reserved to your Majesty. You have beaten Neipperg and Voltaire both. Your Majesty should put laurel leaves in your letters like the ancient Roman generals.

"You deserve at once the triumph of a general and of a poet and you need at least two laurel leaves," he continues. "They say Colonel Camas died much distressed at not being killed before your eyes. Major Knobelsdorf at least had that sad honor, from which may God preserve your Majesty.

"I am sure of your glory, Great King, but I am not sure of your life — among what dangers and labors you pass your wonderful life! Confederacies to foresee or to destroy, allies to make or to retain, sieges, battles, every kind of plan, every sort of action, and all the details of a hero. You will probably have everything except happiness. You can either make an emperor, or prevent one from being made, or make yourself an emperor."

In this letter Voltaire lays at least a section of Frederick's soul quite bare. He shows up the King of Prussia's desire to be a hero on the ancient model, his vanity as a poet, the way his ambition is willing to sacrifice friends, and his hope to make himself an emperor. Frederick frowns at the tone — Voltaire is too flippant.

But it does not change him. Practical matters, the reform of his army's weak arm, the cavalry, negotiations with foreign powers, soon make him forget Voltaire's mopings. And though he feels vindictive towards Schwerin for advising him to retire, though he winces at certain epigrams which begin to circulate, to the effect that at Mollwitz the King of Prussia covered

himself with Glory and flour, his main feeling now is one of confidence and exultation. The Austrians are in retreat — he send couriers galloping to Berlin with the news of the victory — and he knows that the credit for it will eventually be his.

He thinks of the ball that killed a horse under him during the battle — of the way the Austrians at Oppeln might have put a shabby end to his military career if instead of firing through the gates, they had opened them and let him in. A great Prussian victory, and the King of Prussia caught at Oppeln running away! Fate, fate, the whirlwind of events! Voltaire may fear for his life, but Frederick himself no longer does

XIX

The consequences of the battle of Mollwitz were all that Frederick could have hoped. The tremendous fact of the victory itself quite concealed the relatively unimportant question — Did the King of Prussia or one of his generals win it? The European nations had been used to hiring the Prussian infantry as Rome used to hire as auxiliaries to the legionaries the Gallic cavalry. Now, by itself, the Prussian army had defeated an Austrian one of equal size!

Europe of recent years had seen two kings lead their armies in person. But Charles XII of Sweden had been dead twenty-five years, Peter of Russia nearly twenty. Both were admitted barbarians. The young King of Prussia, on the contrary, had already interested Europe as the philosopher-prince. Rumors of his sex idiosyncrasies were also current. He was certainly not like either Charles or Peter — this monarch who had such pretty pages and who directly after a big battle wrote about it in French verse. As Voltaire had said of him, he was unique.

Frederick's humanitarian pretensions, his claiming to be the servant of the state rather than its master, the humility with

which he veiled the true despotism of his nature, had made him cordially disliked by his royal European brothers. Louis XV further disliked him because of the way he made up to Voltaire. The jack-pudding across the Channel, George II, knew that Frederick had directed a number of wise-cracks at him. But Mollwitz made Frederick feared.

His camp at Strehlen became the center of European intrigue during the next few months. France and Bavaria were both about ready to fall on Austria. England, the one country hesitant to pluck a wing or a leg of Pragmatic Sanction, was trying desperately to change Frederick from an enemy of Austria to an ally in the general war about to start, by obtaining concessions from Austria. For high-powered diplomats all roads these days led to Silesia.

Frederick took a very keen delight in feeling himself the master of this complex situation. Could it really be only a year ago that he was still an insignificant Prince-Royal — living at Rheinsberg — drilling his Ruppin regiment — waiting so fretfully for his father to die? And now he is a King whose every word, whose least action, commands attention! In the old days spies were employed by his father to report small incidents of personal misconduct, now spies also watch him, but what they report has passed out of the petty realm of private life into the spacious domains of public history.

He played France against Austria. When the Austrian diplomats — as following the battle of Mollwitz the Silesian fortresses which had thus far held out began falling one after another — began to talk peace, Frederick made a secret treaty with Austria in which he agreed to break another secret treaty he had just made with France. But guessing that the Austrians had crooked intentions he put as a clause in this treaty that if any news of it reached the French it was to be considered invalid. When, as he expected, the Austrians promptly told the

French about it, suggesting that both countries together fall upon and annihilate the treacherous young upstart King of Prussia, he broke the treaty, demanded now the whole of Silesia, and in November received its formal homage as a Prussian province.

Not in a century had this ceremony of the homage-taking been taken in person in Silesia. The Hapsburg emperors were content to do it by proxy. Frederick arrived at the Breslau town-hall in a carriage drawn by eight horses. Already the simplicity which Napoleon would imitate was here. The eight-horse carriage, the Prussian guard drawn up before the door, were about all the pomp. He wore a soiled uniform — no decorations — his hair carelessly dressed. Through some strange neglect of whosesoever business it was, the great golden sword of state, the hilt of which must be kissed by the deputies, had been mislaid. Frederick unfastened his own — the four hundred deputies of all ranks and classes touched their lips to it as they filed past. The magnanimous young conqueror, to win the goodwill of Silesians, gave back the usual homage gift of a ton of gold.

XX

He takes his success lightly. On the one hand he talks poetry to generals who know nothing about it, on the other he writes to Voltaire of his manifold camp activities. There is still flipness in Voltaire's allusions to "your colleague, the sun" in such lines of his as, "The verses your Majesty wrote after Neisse are like those Solomon made in his glory when, after having experienced everything, he said, All is Vanity."

What of it? If there is satire, there is surely envy also. When the arm-chair philosopher writes, "I am convinced that there is no one in the world busier than you and more engaged in a variety of affairs of all kinds," is he not wishing that he too

could be man of action as well as man of thought? Does he not simply write the truth when he says, "I take the liberty of informing your Majesty that the history of Louis XIV seems to me too narrow a circle — I find that Frederick enlarges the sphere of my ideas." ?

Frederick gives back as good as he gets. "I admire you as a philosopher," he declares, "but I like you much better as a poet." To let Voltaire know that in his preachments there is a great deal of what Frederick William would have defined as *wind-macherei,* Frederick defines philosophy for him. — "True philosophy is that firmness of soul and clearness of mind which prevents us from falling into the errors of the vulgar." — To which Voltaire returns, "The only thing I dread is lest you should come to despise men too much. Millions of featherless two-footed animals who people the earth are at an immense distance from your person, in mind as well as in estate. There is a fine verse of Milton — 'Amongst unequals no society.'" — "I owe you two letters to my great regret," writes Frederick. "I have been so busy with those important affairs which philosophers call trash that I cannot yet think of my pleasure, the only solid good in this life. I suppose God created donkeys, Doric columns, and kings to bear the burdens of this world, where so many others seem to be made only to enjoy the good things it produces."

On the 8th of January 1742 Frederick writes to Voltaire from Berlin —

"The day after tomorrow I am going to Rheinsberg to take up once more the crook and the lyre, and please Heaven may I never abandon them again!"

A month later from camp in Moravia he writes —

"The demon which has hitherto driven me up and down has led me to Olmutz to straighten out the affairs which the other allies have entangled. I do not know what will happen,

but I do know that my star is too much of a wanderer. What can you expect from a brain where there is nothing but hay, oats and chaff. You who only work from choice and genius, have pity on a political laborer, who only works from necessity."

XXI

Comes now Frederick's first lesson through experience in the important military truth that success in warfare demands undivided leadership.

The French and Bavarians had already captured Prague when Frederick left Berlin to join them in a march on Vienna. Through the influence of Prussia and France Charles Albert, King of Bavaria, had defeated Maria Theresa's husband at the election for emperor. The Prussian army crossed the Giant Mountains, and in the winter campaign that followed some of the new cavalry organized by Frederick after Mollwitz, led by the able and daring general, Ziethen, penetrated as far south as Stockerau, a few miles from Vienna, the nearest to the capital that Frederick ever came in all his wars.

The winter campaign was a failure. Frederick received no support from his allies. The Saxon officers spent their time reveling in the Bohemian castles, and finally the Saxon army went home. What towns were taken were found like Iglau in the condition that Napoleon found Moscow — deserted by the inhabitants, all the food destroyed or taken away, and on the verge of breaking into flames.

In the spring Prince Charles of Lorraine, Maria Theresa's brother-in-law, advanced into Bohemia at the head of an Austrian army, superior in numbers to Frederick's but lacking the artillery. The battle of Chotusitz, fought in clouds of dust, not a snowstorm, was again won for Frederick by his infantry.

The victory buoyed Frederick up tremendously after the

gloom into which the events of his second winter of war had plunged him.

"You see your friend has gained a second victory in the space of thirteen months," he writes to Jordan. "Who could have foretold, a few years ago, that the scholar who learned philosophy from you, rhetoric from Cicero, and how to think from Bayle, could play a military part in the world? Who could have imagined that Providence would select a poet to overthrow the political system of Europe, and to make a total change in the political combinations of kings?"

Never has Frederick's sense of his own uniqueness, the belief in himself as a man of destiny, been so great as after the battle of Chotusitz. Now the world will know that Mollwitz was not just chance! His soldiers too have more confidence in him. He has just turned thirty.

It is in such high moments of worldly success that Frederick most likes to be found playing his flute dolefully, or wrapped up in the composition of French verses.

"When shall we meet again under the peaceful beeches of Rheinsberg," he asks Jordan, "or under the magnificent limes of Charlottenbourg? . . . When shall we again be able to philosophize at pleasure on the follies of men and the nothingness of our condition?"

Voltaire's continued flipness is becoming tedious.

"You ask me how long my colleagues have agreed to ruin the earth," flashes Frederick angrily. "To this I answer that I have not the slightest knowledge but that it is now the fashion to make war and that I presume it will last a long time."

Pacifists who give advice without taking into account the practical difficulties!

"The Abbé de Saint-Pierre, who distinguishes me sufficiently to honor me with his correspondence, has sent me a beautiful book on the way to reestablish peace in Europe and to retain it

forever. The thing is most practicable — for its success all that is lacking is the consent of Europe and a few similar trifles."

But in Voltaire's sarcasm he again hears the ring of real truth. "While I have been ill," declares the Frenchman, who had expected to die, "your Majesty has accomplished more great actions than I have endured fever fits. I could not reply to your Majesty's last favors. Moreover, where should I have addressed my letter? To Vienna? — To Pressburg? — To Temesvar?"

The whirlwind of events is bearing Frederick along so rapidly that Voltaire cannot keep track of him. To the capital of Austria — the capital of Hungary — the Far East into which great Alexander, seeking ever new worlds to conquer, had disappeared? But let the Frenchman jeer!

"You think perhaps that I have not enough worries here and that I must in addition be troubled about your health," Frederick writes back. "You may be certain that the life I am leading has changed neither my character nor my way of thinking. I love Rheinsberg and its quiet days, but we must adapt ourselves to our station in life and make our duties a pleasure."

XXII

The victory of Chotusitz marks the end of the first Silesian war. The general European one went on, but Austria and Prussia made a separate peace, by which Frederick was to keep Silesia.

For his withdrawal from the war Frederick was promptly accused by France of perfidy. But before he made peace with Austria Frederick had discovered that France was trying to do so also. — Move first! — "The Cardinal takes me for a fool and means to desert me, but I will be beforehand with him."

Actually, if things go badly with the French Frederick means to come back into the war, as he knows Austria, triumphant,

will then take him on for revenge. But he needs a breathing spell. He has gained Silesia, but the war has used up all his father's savings.

Time to fill the treasury again . . . time to fill the gaps in his army. — Also will not this withdrawal increase his political importance? — Soon, as Frederick hoped, Fleury is calling him the arbiter of Europe, while in England Walpole affirms that the King of Prussia holds in his hands the balance of European power.

What Hohenzollern indeed has ever occupied a position of equal importance? But Frederick still chooses modestly to put forward his philosopher's sandal — he takes no real interest in war, despite his ability at it. He is really interested only in building an opera house in Berlin, in overcoming Voltaire's objections to joining the "flock" in Prussia, and in such matters. He wants in truth to be what Voltaire, flatteringly, calls him, not only the king who in war "can be in an infinite number of places at once," but who, "where some minds have not a single taste, your mind has them all. With your Majesty one taste does not harm the others."

But all the time he is strengthening the forts in Silesia. . . . He is increasing his army. . . . Four years after his father's death he has raised it from eighty to a hundred and twenty thousand men.

XXIII

He watches Europe.

For England the peace with Prussia has removed the menace of an attack on Hanover. The jack-pudding has come over to emulate Frederick and lead a Pragmatic Army in person against the French. The Austrians have entered Bavaria and driven the Emperor, "so called," from his capital of Munich.

But June 27th, Uncle George with his Pragmatic Army defeats the French at Dettingen.

Frederick makes great mock of this victory. He says that his uncle's horse ran away with him, that there was nothing left for George to do but to get off or be thrown off. That drawing his sword, George then put one gartered leg forward like a fencing master, and standing motionless in this pose, sword extended, large fish eyes to the front, at the head of his hungry Hanoverian troops, became a royal signpost pointing the way to victory and breakfast. A victory that seemed at the beginning of the battle a sure victory not for the English but for the French.

Frederick by now has all his father's dislike of England. For twenty years Austria intrigues to break off an alliance between Prussia and England, plays England dirty tricks, and now here is England fighting on Austria's side! He is already thinking in terms of resources and men. Had the English marriages been made, English money and the Hanoverian army could be drawn upon to help him realize his ambitions. The English navy would be his too.

England, Holland and Austria conclude an alliance against France at Worms. A letter from George II to Maria Theresa falls into Frederick's hands. Referring to Silesia, it contains the interesting line —

"Madame, that which is worth taking is worth retaking."

Maria Theresa is still calling him the bad man. The long-haired Hungarian nobles who wept and brandished their swords wildly when she appeared with her newly born child in her arms and threw herself on their protection, still growl over their goulash whenever the King of Prussia's name is mentioned. This woman, five years younger than himself, is evidently becoming confident she will have her revenge. And another woman — Elizabeth — is now Czarina of Russia.

XXIV

A visit from Voltaire.

The old fox is in Berlin as Cardinal Fleury's unofficial envoy to bring Frederick back into the war. These persistent efforts of his to meddle in what lies outside his department! Frederick is not pleased that Voltaire who always can find excuses for not coming to live in Prussia, who defended Maria Theresa, wants to influence his political actions.

They walk and talk together, but their wills are in constant conflict. "I often mingled questions relative to France and Austria in our conversations on the Æneid or Livy," admits Voltaire, after his departure. But Frederick would tell him nothing, though he had already determined to reenter the war.

Voltaire's mind is a storehouse of knowledge from which the King of Prussia wishes to be able to help himself whenever the mood seizes him. But the older Frederick grows the more contemptuous he becomes of thought independent of action. Voltaire is a pedagogue — if of an exalted kind. Frederick resents his attempts to give advice, in the same way that he resented the wish of the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau to be his military tutor.

Two years have passed since the treaty of peace with Austria. . . . Frederick now has both money and men again. . . . His Silesian fortresses are all strengthened and well-garrisoned. . . . He is ready to strike.

He has achieved Glory in Silesia but this will fade into insignificance beside what he now intends to achieve. He means to silence forever this gossip that in the last war it was really his dead father who was more responsible for the victories than himself. — Strike fast and hard! — When he makes peace this time it will not be in Breslau, but down south there in Vienna!

Part Four

THE BAD MAN

I

THE beginning of the second Silesian war found Frederick buoyant with enthusiasm and ambition. He still believed in a confederation of German states, with himself at the head of it, in a truly German empire which would take its orders from Berlin instead of Vienna. The collapse of Austria, if postponed a little, seemed nevertheless certain.

He looked carefully around Europe and where did he see a country having as its king a man young, vigorous, talented and industrious like himself? In France old Cardinal Fleury was dead. From now on, sensual, slothful Louis XV would be governed entirely by his mistresses. Before he leaves Berlin, pointing to some ballet dancers on the stage of the opera, Frederick exclaims sarcastically, "Look there — what a perfect image of the French ministry. All legs and no head." England's real interests lay not on the Continent but out in America and India, and Uncle George anyway was a joke. Russia, like its ruler, the fat Elizabeth, was too poorly organized to do anything quickly. A Hapsburg idiot ruled Spain. Sweden had ended with Charles.

He himself was minister, mistress and king in one. He commanded his army in person. Austrian generals who made mistakes were superseded from Vienna — the continuity of any military policy Austria might have was therefore repeatedly broken — he being king as well as commander had power not only over the army but of the resources back of it.

Frederick dresses carelessly now. He cultivates dirty cavalry boots. He spills snuff on his coat. The dirty old hat which he wears night as well as day, now begins to make its appearance.

Not to be obvious, but complex, different. But power clothed in simplicity is a paradox more appealing to men's imaginations than Bourbon pomp. In youth when Frederick had no power, he craved the flashy externals, now when he has it he cares less and less for them.

He has increased the severity of the discipline in the Prussian army but he frequently, like Cæsar, fraternizes with his soldiers. It costs him nothing to do this — to taste the soup occasionally, to tell a group to keep on smoking when he comes up to it. While his subordinates become unpopular through carrying out his harsh orders, he courts popularity by show of leniency.

Yes, he is the ruler without any weakening vice, the only one who thinks for himself, is not carried away by physical passions, and can therefore put all he has got into the achieving of Glory.

When Voltaire visited him Frederick exhibited proudly a magnificent bed, big and luxurious enough to suit even the fornications of a Bourbon. It was a dummy bed — it hid a library.

II

Move fast! Do the unexpected in war as well as in private life! He issues a manifesto giving his reasons for reentering the war. He has come back not on his own account but as a loyal elector sworn to uphold the imperial dignity. Here is clever mockery of the Hapsburgs who have always expected just this of the Brandenburg elector, but now are busy chasing around luckless Charles, Frederick's " so-called " Emperor. When Frederick delivers this manifesto the Prussian troops are already on the march.

Three armies, one under Old Leopold, one under Schwerin, one led by himself, converge on Prague. Saxony now leans to Austria. Frederick, who takes the attitude that all international diplomacy is dishonest, that war being war becomes a farce if not waged ruthlessly, marches across Saxony violating its neutrality. He knows permission to cross would not be given him if he asked for it.

Ziethen with the new cavalry goes ahead of the main column. The siege artillery is transported on boats up the Elbe.

The army, the escort to the boats which go up the river past Dresden, have stern orders to do no damage, leave the women alone, keep their hands off the poultry and pigs, pay for everything, in short to be kind in every way to the inhabitants of Saxony — but they go through just the same.

At news that the bad man is back again Maria Theresa makes another appeal to the Hungarians at Pressburg. There is an exodus of families from the north of Bohemia, and a last minute attempt to put Prague in a state of defense.

At the Saxon-Bohemian frontier the Elbe has been blocked with piles and boulders to stop the Prussian boats from going further. Clearing the obstruction away delays them a week.

As he rides through Saxony Frederick keeps posing to his officers hypothetical military problems — if three regiments of enemy infantry appeared suddenly over that hilltop, when you, General Krantz, having taken up through overhasty reconnoitring an insecure position to the left of the windmill — if that wood over there concealed the advance guard of a large Austrian army, and you Major Chazot, with your left protected by the marsh, and your right resting upon yonder village — if . . . He has a soft pleasant voice, but they grow weary of listening to it.

On the second of September he is with his army in front of Prague. The siege cannon arrive on the eighth. Next day the

bombardment begins. A week later the Prussians enter the Bohemian capital.

The entire garrison of Prague, over twelve thousand men, become Frederick's prisoners — he himself has lost forty. A brilliant beginning indeed!

In a month he has won back what the French lost!

III

During the assault on Prague an incident occurs which adds to Frederick's growing conviction that he bears a charmed life, that he is not predestined to die on the battlefield.

He is in the midst of his staff watching the storming of one of the forts when a cannon ball strikes the group, killing at his side his cousin, Prince Albert Frederick of Brandenburg-Schwedt. The news of the King's miraculous escape travels fast through the army. But the mood of his army is already very different from that of the one which he led into Silesia four years ago. Frederick is no longer the young inexperienced captain, but almost a veteran — he has two victories behind him, he has twice escaped capture, and now twice death. This escape, however, adds another story to that reputation for being bullet-proof which will be such an important factor later in the victory-psychology of Frederick's armies. Now, is it not an omen of the success of the coming campaign?

Frederick wants his army to be thought of in Europe as the army of youth and opportunity. He takes no interest in ambitious old generals who would like to do his thinking for him, and also to share in the glory. Fearless young lieutenants, full of dash and fire, and content always to carry out *his* orders, are the ones he wishes to have for officers. He aims to get these by promoting men from the ranks, and by extending an invitation to foreign officers showing such qualities.

So at Prague he singles out a private named Kraul who showed especial bravery in the attack. He orders Kraul to be allowed to sit in his uniform of private at the table of the generals, gives him a large money present, makes him an officer, and ennobles him under the title of Kraul von Ziskaberg, Ziska being the name of the fort he had stormed.

In the captured garrison an Austrian officer named Lentulus breaks his sword rather than surrender it. Frederick sends for him, admires his spirit, invites him into his service. Lentulus does not change sides until after the second Silesian war has ended, but then he enters the Prussian army, and during the Seven Years War becomes one of Frederick's most distinguished generals.

Fearlessness in the attack! — death sooner than surrender! — let these be your motto, soldiers!

IV

Onward to Vienna!

Leaving General Einseidel in command at Prague, Frederick starts south. Two armies this time. Young Leopold, Anhalt-Dessau's son, taking one, he the other. Both following the stream of the Moldau.

Prague — Vienna — Pressburg — ? But no, Frederick's dream does not reach eastward as far as did Alexander's. There is plenty of Glory to be got in Europe. He does not even want to swallow up Austria. He wants only to break its power in western Europe, while leaving it strong enough to function as a buffer state on the east against the Turks.

He rides along wrapped in dreams of Empire.

It is early October. An ominous stillness, an absence of life or movement, hangs on the Bohemian plain. There were Protestant well-wishers to the Prussians in Silesia, but on this march

south of the Giant Mountains every mile is taking him deeper into the dark superstitious heart of Catholic Austria.

A land of bogs and forest. . . . Abandoned farms, burning villages. The Prussian leaves behind it a trail of skeletons of the oxen which draw the supply wagons. Nine days to go sixty miles! Frederick, with a cold fury, sees his army wasting away, and winter coming on. His whole plan for paralyzing Austria by the swiftness, the breath-taking boldness of his drive, may fail if he cannot make Bohemia his before the cold comes.

He tries to make the natives friendly, to prevent this wanton destruction of food and shelter, which makes his march forward as through a desert. Proclamations, appeals to reason, are of no use here. The priests have been busy — it is the Anti-Christ coming.

Onward the Prussian army staggers, until finally, exhausted, it can go no farther. No matter — Prince Charles with the Austrian army is still on the Rhine several hundred miles away. The folly of leaving Vienna undefended — yet how could they dream he would have the audacity? From Prague he will drive southward in the spring.

But a courier brings the staggering news that Prince Charles, eluding the half-hearted efforts of the French to stop him, has crossed the Rhine and, joined by a Saxon army, is even now entering Bohemia to cut off his retreat.

V

Maria Theresa's brother-in-law, the commander-in-chief of the Austrian army, had marched to take away Bavaria from the impudent King Frederick and the French were scheming to have made the next Emperor.

During the two years that Frederick was out of the war its theatre had shifted from Silesia to the Rhine. The French, so

quick to accuse Frederick of treachery when he made peace, were always thinking mainly of their own interests. They wanted the King of Prussia to use his army as they directed, and it was only chance when their aims coincided. France's program at this time held two main items — the crushing of Austria on the continent, and the annihilation of England as a sea and colonizing power.

But underground intriguing always went on. Frederick, though a useful ally in the first of these aims, had been unpopular in France since making peace. Prince Charles's army was allowed to cross the Rhine one moonlight night without any attempt being made to stop it, and the old general sent as an afterthought to follow him was bribed by England not to attack him in the rear.

Frederick had not expected this. When he came back into the war it had been arranged that as soon as Prince Charles started for Austria France should press on swiftly after him. . . . He would be waiting in Bohemia. . . . Charles would thus be caught in a trap. At the right moment the Prussians would have him by the head, while the French took care of the tail.

And here Prince Charles was, with Saxons pouring over the Metal Mountains to join him, and not a Frenchman in sight.

VI

Ninety thousand men between him and Prague!

The unexpected return of the Austrian army dismays Frederick. He suspects French treachery. For an instant he has the impulse to risk all in a mad dash upon Vienna while the winter is still young. But can he now even hold Prague, let alone continue his advance into Austria? No, bitter as was the realization, Frederick guessed that he must abandon the project entirely,

must retreat altogether out of Bohemia and cross the mountains to Silesia before it was too late.

But it takes him some time to act on this resolution. The opposition of his generals to further advance, their obvious consternation at the turn affairs have taken, make him stubbornly persist in staying for a while. One big battle with the Austrians! But Marshal Traun, commanding under Prince Charles, is cautious. He is willing to let the winter defeat Frederick for him, as the Russian commanders will be willing to let winter defeat Napoleon on his Moscow campaign.

His army deserts in large numbers. The natives, whooped up by their priests, are now more hostile than ever towards Anti-Christ. Before the cold . . . lack of food . . . desertion . . . his fine army dwindles. Again, as before Mollwitz, Frederick staggers around looking for a battle, but this time Traun takes care that he does not find it.

For weeks he hesitates, his pride revolting at having to abandon Prague, and make this ignominious retreat into Silesia. Later on in life, when his refusal to allow his will to be contradicted, to allow circumstances to argue with him, has become absolute, Frederick would doubtless refuse to abandon Prague, or at least command some general to hold it against hopeless odds, and then court-martial him for failing.

But now he yields to the advice of his generals. They say it would be suicide to stay south of the mountains the whole winter with the main Austrian army so close. Not only might his army be destroyed, but he himself might be captured. He sees Vienna — which seemed already in his grasp so short a while ago — dwindling into the distance, as he sends a messenger to Einseidel to evacuate Prague, and himself starts north with his army for Silesia.

VII

His first retreat.

What days and nights of toiling through the rocky passes of the Giant Mountains. What rain, wind and snow. What Pandours harassing the rear guard!

Glory! The faces of the soldiers show what they think now of this expedition to capture Vienna. The victories of Mollwitz and Chotusitz have faded beside the reality of these hardships on the terrible mountain roads, where the infantry, in rags, stumbles along, men, barefooted, dragging at the cannon, and flogged to their feet again when they fall.

No battle has been fought and yet he has been defeated. Nothing infuriates Frederick so much as these losses he sustains from natural, not human, causes.

But he is still on the surface the philosopher, the man of letters, the musician. He has books in his tent. He writes philosophically to Voltaire. While men are being shot and flogged to death for attempted desertion he plays airs on the flute or caresses the graceful greyhounds that always accompany him on his campaigns.

VIII

Indeed in the lonely soul of this egoist the grim and terrible mountain landscape, made more sombre and forbidding by the winding trail of corpses, awakens a genuine esthetic response. The sheer frowning cliffs, the bleak wintry sky, all the details of human horror which mark the retreat, satisfy that nostalgia for the terrible and monstrous which lies at the opposite pole from his desire for glory. A tiny, heroic figure he sees himself, toiling through these mountains, watched by the gods.

In adversity Frederick is very apt to look at himself objectively from a historical perspective. In defeat as well as in

victory he thus becomes of importance to himself. "My grand army," he writes later of this disastrous retreat which cost so many nameless lives, took such a toll of suffering, "which was to swallow up Bohemia and to overrun Austria, met with the same fate that befell the invincible Armada of Philip II of Spain."

An Armada is sunk. A Grand Army vanishes. Is not history made up of such facts?

Frederick's nature always swings two ways. He wants to succeed — but then success is open to ridicule. Failure of the right kind, on the contrary, is tragic — and the tragic note places its hero above mockery.

He admits very frankly all the mistakes made by him on this campaign. But it is noticeable that whenever Frederick gets beaten he always speaks highly of the merits of his opponent. At the same time he only admits with the greatest reluctance that one of his own generals ever taught him anything.

"Prosperity is often more dangerous to princes than adversity," is the not altogether original truth he claims this campaign to have taught him. "The one intoxicates them with presumption, the other renders them cautious and modest."

IX

With cynical appreciation Frederick had meanwhile been watching the toy-soldier antics of Louis XV.

It was Louis's mistress, Madame de Châteauroux, who persuaded him finally to follow the lead of Frederick and George and place himself at the head of his armies. She kept talking to him of Frederick and his victories, of George whose inspiring presence at Dettingen had resulted in the defeat of the French.

Louis did not want to go. He was not impressed by her

arguments that to be a really great king he must show galiantry on the battlefield as well as in the bedchamber. But finally to stop the talking he went.

He went, but most of his Court had to go with him. A huge body of princes, duchesses, valets, barbers, physicians, prostitutes, pimps, and priests fell in line behind him as he started out to look for the enemy. Madame de Châteauroux was along, handy beside him in the spacious golden coach.

Away from home, the first thing he did was fall ill. The priests promptly took him in hand and he confessed everything. He sent his mistress away. But he did not die, and when he recovered he found they were calling him the Well-Beloved.

He was well, eating three meals a day, and he wanted his mistress back. She came. A week later she died mysteriously — thought to have been poisoned.

Hearing that the Austrians were talking about coming over the Rhine and taking Paris he rushed as fast as his coach would take him to Freyburg and started besieging it. Winter had come and it was cold watching the town hold out week after week against his troops.

When Freyburg fell at last he went home and got into bed again.

X

The French minister Valori — *mon gros* Valori, Frederick called him — saw Frederick when, with the wreck of his army he reached Silesia.

He seemed a different man. Dark and ugly he looked, his eyes smouldering fury. His thin mouth had a cruel look. Valori was shocked at this change — would hardly have recognized the King.

The light mocking manner he affected was quite gone. He

mocked, but only brutally now. At the slightest contradiction the face of the young King became terrible to see.

That his grand scheme should have melted away like this! To plunge into Bohemia, take Prague so swiftly, and then have the winter bring him to this ruin; cold, privation, and exhaustion swallow up his army without a battle.

Defeated by an invisible enemy, upon whom no revenge could ever be taken! Ah, the thought! What a figure he cut looking for Traun and the battle which like some coquette of a woman — if he cared for women any more — always evaded his arms!

No, this is not the same man who started out from Berlin in September.

Frederick William in the same mood would have lashed out with hands and feet. The son waits until his passion can expend itself in another battle. Perhaps he is therefore more dangerous, more malevolent, since he makes others his means.

His generals cannot sufficiently watch their step these days. Einseidel, who has a terrible time getting away from Prague, Frederick treats shockingly for not having carried out orders in every detail. When Old Leopold, forced by circumstances, deviates slightly from the direction of a march route —

"I am greatly surprised that your Excellency does not more accurately follow my orders." Frederick rebukes him in that icily polite tone of his, so much more deadly than shouting, "If you were more skilful than Cæsar and did not with strict fidelity obey my directions, all else were no help to me. I hope that this notice will once for all be enough, and that in the future you will give no further cause for complaint."

No further cause for complaint! — and the speaker the boy whose head he has seen rapped so many times, who might be his grandson! Old gunpowder-faced Leopold looks at Frederick and swallows — he looks at the other officers standing

around who have heard all this, and swallows again—he salutes and retires.

XI

The tiny principality of Anhalt-Dessau from which Old Leopold had his name lay a hundred miles to the south of Berlin. It was one of the three hundred diminutive courts which made up the Empire.

The family was an old one, older than the Hohenzollerns. Old Leopold, as he was called to distinguish him from his son Young Leopold, did not even bow to the King of Prussia. But what field for military talents was the tiny country in which he did keep a tiny army? He had chosen instead to enter the service of Frederick's father.

They had tastes in common, and also had shared experiences. They had served together in their youth under Eugene. Both liked to drill, and to hold inspections. One day Leopold had his great idea.

The inventor of iron ramrods did not have to care what people thought of him. It might cause a scandal in the Empire, but he married an apothecary's daughter just the same.

His two sons Leopold and Maurice were also in the Prussian service. They had been drilled by Frederick in that company of Crown Prince cadets which his father had formed for him when he was a boy. Old Leopold, before all practical-minded, had scarcely had them taught to read and write.

A slow, taciturn, very painstaking man with a face the color of gunpowder. . . . He never gets over Frederick's treatment of him upon becoming King. . . . But the die is cast—to the rigid discipline which he has created, he must now himself submit.

He sees his iron ramrods and iron discipline winning victories. He sees precious, laboriously trained men and expensive

equipment being tossed about recklessly by a foolhardy young King. He now hears himself told to *give no further cause for complaint.* Herr Jesus!

Frederick, who appreciates the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau's industry, thinks him in many ways an obstinate old fool.

XII

What is Berlin saying?

Frederick knows there is still a pro-Austrian party in Prussia. He can imagine what a blow to his military reputation this ill-fated winter campaign has been. He needs more money and more men. Half a million a month, and half his army, has been the cost of this campaign which was to humble Austria. As soon as he reaches Silesia, he leaves Old Leopold in command, and hurries back to his capital.

He silences criticism in Berlin by laying the blame for his failure upon the French. He minimizes his losses, and when he has the massive solid silver fixtures in the palace — purposely placed here by Frederick William for just such an emergency — melted up into coin, they are carried away to the mint secretly. All his preparations are being made for the spring, when he intends to beat the Austrians in a big battle.

But Maria Theresa, triumphant at her success in driving him out of Bohemia, has ordered that the Prussians be immediately chased from Silesia. Frederick had expected the Austrians to go into winter quarters. Instead he hears from Leopold that an invasion of Silesia is being planned — that Austrian troops are already crossing the border — that the Silesians have been commanded to forget all about the oath of allegiance they took to the King of Prussia, which had been confirmed in the treaty of Breslau, and to get ready to swear back again to her.

An invasion of Silesia by Austria — a quadruple alliance

made between Austria, England, Holland and Saxony at Warsaw — the French holding back! What does the future hold for him now?

English gold has done it! Without the English subsidies how could penniless Austria raise and equip such armies? And this gold might be flowing to Berlin instead of Vienna! Why was it predestined that he marry the nonentity at Schönhausen he never sees, instead of a useful English princess — why that an English queen should never have the name of Wilhelmine!

XIII

Since her marriage Wilhelmine had not been happy. She had to submit to the humiliation of being constantly twitted by Frederick about her princeling husband, and their farce of a Court. She had a besotted father-in-law. She had recently discovered that her favorite lady-in-waiting, Mademoiselle de Marwitz, was having an affair with her husband.

Wilhelmine had wanted to come to Berlin when their father was dying. Frederick wrote angrily — "What on earth do you want here? You will be received like a dog, and get no thanks for coming. Remain at Bayreuth, and amuse yourself, and do not dream of coming to a hell where you hear only groans and cries, and where everyone is ill-used. I will inform you of the King's health each time the post leaves."

But she and her husband were visiting Frederick at Rheinsberg when the Emperor died. He was mockingly polite, and again made jokes about the Margrave's tippling and financial difficulties. The Margrave of Ansbach, husband of his younger sister Frederika, came in for the same treatment. Wilhelmine remembered that he gave him a snuff-box made of some cheap stone cracked across the middle — "which he immediately gave away to his valet." All these Margraves and Serenities of

the Empire were lumped together by the young King of Prussia as little nobodies whose pretensions were made to be ridiculed. He told them nothing of his plans.

Wilhelmine, too, wanted to be different. She went away from Rheinsberg determined to attract attention by doing the same thing at Bayreuth. At Bayreuth she had her "Hermitage," where the classic note also prevailed. There were painted ceilings showing Leonidas defending the Pass, Artaxerxes receiving Themistocles, Orpheus charming the wild beasts with his lyre, Alexander being reprimanded by Aristotle for extravagance, Roman matrons defending Rome from the Barbarians. There was a Greek amphitheatre, a great artificial rock with Apollo and the Nine Muses sitting on top, another artificial rock which concealed the door to a grotto, more artificial rocks scattered around an Italian court. "Every path in the woods leads to some hermit's cave or other device, each differing from those of the other," writes Wilhelmine. She is particularly proud of a ruined temple "like those you see at Rome" which the Bayreuth workmen have built for her. "I have dedicated it to the Muses and have placed in it the pictures of all the famous scientific men of the last century — Descartes, Leibnitz, Locke, Newton, Bayle, Voltaire, Maupertuis, etc. From all I have said it will be clear that the Hermitage is unique of its kind."

To be different, talked about, the Hypatia of her times. But it is hard to see the Prince of Wales marrying the Princess of Saxe-Gotha, far less attractive than herself. It is hard for the daughter of one king, and the sister of another, to have a husband of such little account that one's brother can order him around like a lacquey, and when, quite within his own rights, he negotiates with outside states, this brother writes angrily —

"Tell him that he must not conclude treaties without consulting the Head of the Family!"

XIV

"Hurl them out! — Gather twenty, thirty thousand men, if need be, but let there be no delay! — I will as soon be pitched out of Brandenburg as out of Silesia."

This is Frederick's peremptory message to Old Leopold when he hears that the Austrians are in Silesia.

And the army to do it with, your Majesty? Old Leopold has not yet forgotten that "If you were as skilful as Cæsar — " etc. Is not the young King himself responsible for the present situation? And now, what he cannot do himself, he blithely orders another to do for him! Old Leopold cannot and does not hurl them out without delay. Give him time, he writes, and he may be able to do it, but he cannot take the offensive on such short notice.

Frederick suspects him of sulking, and sweeps aside all objections. When the Austrians have not been expelled by the 19th of December he writes —

"On the 21st I leave Berlin, and mean to be at Neisse on the 24th at latest. Your Excellency will, in the meantime, make out the order of battle for the regiments which have come in. For I will, on the 25th, without delay, cross the Neisse, and attack those people, cost what it may, and chase them out of Silesia, and follow them as far as possible. You will therefore take measures and provide everything, that the project may be executed the moment I arrive."

The moment I arrive! Echoes, ringing down through the centuries of that other cry — *Veni, vidi, vici!*

He gallops to Schweidnitz. Prince Charles's wife is ill, and he has gone home to her. This leaves able Marshal Traun in command of the Austrians. Old Leopold shows Frederick the strong position on the south side of the Neisse the Marshal has taken up.

Frederick is not afraid of Prince Charles but he has a great deal more respect for Traun. In later years he would insist upon the attack simply because he had scheduled it. But now he looks at those steep cliffs in silence . . . and returns to Berlin.

XV

When Frederick had gone, like Schwerin at Mollwitz, the old general who had invented iron ramrods, but who could not gather men and equipment from trees as the fruit-loving young King did grapes in his Potsdam hothouses, breathed a deep sigh of relief.

Old Leopold did not like to be hurried. Such dashing about, such ordering to do this and do that, bewildered him. He was a heavy man, well ballasted behind, who liked to move slowly. He had not yet recovered from the shock of the young King's invasion of Silesia. Who could have guessed this flute-playing Prince would one day be seized with such insane military ambitions?

He sent out recruiting agents and gathered in men methodically, feeling a great relief that he was again alone. Two weeks was a very short time, but it was better than that " without delay." Cautiously, on the 9th of January, with an army of twenty-five thousand men, he crossed the Neisse.

But if Old Leopold was cautious Marshal Traun was even more so. Why, indeed, take a risk now when Vienna had promised him reinforcements, and these would soon be on the way? Like Frederick to Leopold, the Austrian court was sending Traun peremptory commands to hurl out the Prussians. But the Marshal knew Vienna well enough to be certain that, as he was not a grand-duke, one big battle against Frederick lost would just about put an end to his military career.

So the two cautious old men faced each other, the Prince of

Anhalt-Dessau slowly advancing, Marshal Traun slowly retreating. Neither wishing a battle, there was none. Traun went backwards, breaking down the bridges behind him. Old Leopold went forwards, building them up again.

Keep the army on the move until spring, that is about all he can do, thinks Leopold. He himself is too old and sick to ride, and is driven about in a rough two-wheeled cart. All this moving without a battle annoys Frederick, though he lets it get by. "In winter a great deal of marching is as bad as a battle," he complains from the depths of his own recent experience.

But the Austrians are out of Silesia, and that is the main thing. Frederick mockingly orders the Te Deum to be sung in the churches of Silesia for the deliverance from invasion.

And then his Emperor dies!

XVI

The unfortunate Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, a host for innumerable diseases which were killing him, but otherwise unwanted by anybody except the rulers interested in making him a figurehead, had passed through Bayreuth in the year 1742, when on the way to his coronation at Frankfort. Being very poor, and travelling incognito, he had only a couple of attendants and did not stop to visit the Margrave, sending a messenger to pay his respects. But here in little uneventful Bayreuth was a social event! Wilhelmine told the Margrave to mount his horse and bring the Emperor back if possible. The Margrave galloped, caught up with the Emperor, had a pleasant chat with him by the roadside for a few minutes but otherwise, to Wilhelmine's great chagrin, no luck.

She and her husband went to Frankfort for the coronation. It was in midwinter, and the carriage broke down continually on roads axle-deep in mud. With them was the young lady

Mademoiselle de Marwitz who was stealing away the Margrave's affections.

So ill with gout that he could hardly stand up to go through the ceremony, they saw the King of Bavaria crowned. He had neither money nor troops, and now no country, as the Austrians were in Bavaria. He was trying to gain over the Princes of the Empire, and it was in this connection that the Margrave received his rebuke from Frederick.

But Wilhelmine was more interested in meeting the Empress. There was no precedent as yet of a king's daughter and the present Empress having met, and she did not know to what rights she might lay claim.

She was not going to allow the Empress to put anything over on her as the wife of an insignificant margrave, and conditioned that she must be received as a king's daughter.

Number One — the Empress's Court, if the wretched woman had any, must receive her at the foot of the stairs. Number Two — the Empress must meet her at the door of her bedroom. Number Three — (could she get away with this?) — the Empress must offer her an armchair to sit on.

The Empress's Mistress of the Robes said she would look into the matter.

Well, if these conditions were granted she would have asserted her position and if they weren't she would simply not go to call on the Empress. Wilhelmine talked it over with people supposed to know something about Imperial etiquette. They seemed to think she could not insist on the armchair.

And so it turned out! After a long dispute with the Mistress of Ceremonies Wilhelmine won her first two points but not her third. The best that the Empress could do for her would be to use quite a small armchair herself.

From this interview with the Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, Wilhelmine took away the impression of a short, fat

little woman, round as a ball, very ugly, and agitated. From her armchair — by no means as small as it might have been — she talked German to Wilhelmine, sitting beside her in a skimpy little straight-backed chair. Wilhelmine spoke one dialect, the Empress another — they caught the meaning of a word here and there, and guessed at the rest.

The Emperor was to have been present at the meeting but he was inconveniently too ill to come, and he died three years afterwards.

His son and successor, Maximilian Joseph, a youth of sixteen, in return for money and the restoring to him of Bavaria, now renounced all claims on Austria, and promised to vote for Maria Theresa's husband at the next election for Emperor.

XVII

From Silesia, where from March on Frederick again commands in person, his letters to Berlin show increasing anger at the way Fortune is treating him.

"Either I will maintain my all or lose my all," he writes to his minister Podewils. "If all alliances, resources and negotiations fail, and all conjunctures go against me, I prefer to perish with honor than lead an inglorious life, deprived of all dignity. My ambition whispers me that I have done more than another to the building up of my house, and have played a distinguished part among the crowned heads of Europe."

Self-interest and patriotism, ambition and service to the State, are jumbled up together by him in these communications.

"To maintain myself in Silesia has become, as it were, a personal duty, which I will fulfill at the expense of my happiness and my life. I will maintain my power, or it may go to ruin, and the Prussian name be buried under it. If the enemy attempt anything upon us, we will either beat them, or will all be hewed

to pieces for the sake of our country and the renown of Brandenburg. If I am to perish let it be with honor and sword in hand."

The threat of suicide, the phrase about dying sword in hand, are from now on frequently encountered in Frederick's letters when things are going badly with him.

"There is not a man among us who will not rather have his backbone broken than give up one foot-breadth of ground," he says, with remarkable insight into the thoughts of the soldiers. "They must either grant us a good peace, or we will surpass ourselves by miracles of daring, and force the enemy to accept it from us. Our situation is disagreeable, but my determination is taken. If we needs must fight, we will do it like men driven desperate. Never was there a greater peril than that I am now in! But time, at its own pleasure, will untie this knot — destiny will determine the event. The game I play is so high one cannot contemplate the issue with cold blood. Pray for the return of my good luck."

He sees the death of the Emperor as "the only event wanting to complete the confusion and embroilment which already existed in the political relations of the European powers." He is made furious by the way English gold has bought up young Maximilian, and the certainty that Maria Theresa's husband will now be the next Emperor.

May Fortune only favor him in one big battle!

XVIII

To the south-east of Silesia a chain of mountains rises against the sky. The Silesian peasants, the Prussian garrisons of the fortresses, see, when they look eastward in the morning, the sun rise from over the plains of Poland, but at night, facing west, they watch the red disk sinking behind this sombre barrier on the far side of which lies Austrian Bohemia.

The Giant and the Metal Mountains lay to the right and front of Frederick when he went up the Oder into Silesia. He passed through them on his terrible retreat from Bohemia. They form the watershed from which the melting snows trickle down on one side to join the Oder flowing into the Baltic, and on the other the Elbe making for the North Sea, and are a northern extension of those still wilder, even more sombre Carpathians whose great arch is the northern boundary between Austria and Poland, and at Transylvania the eastern one between Austria and Turkey.

A raw, primitive region, which travellers from plain to plain like to pass through quickly. The home of bears, wolves and wild swine whose long tusks gleam ferociously as with little red eyes they turn and stare an instant before crashing into the thickets. Where even the hut of a wretched charcoal burner looks sinister.

Through this rugged natural hundred-mile-long frontier there are many passes. Before the bad man took the rich northern province away, and in Silesia the elegant costume of the Austrian officer gave way to the short-tail coat of the Prussian, military detachments traversed them frequently going from the Bohemian and Moravian forts on one side to Glatz and Neisse on the other. Through the Giant Mountains, not as high, not as wide, not as stark as the Carpathians, but still a great and formidable barrier, these would travel, toiling up the narrow rocky roads with the dark pine forest pressing in upon them and only a small patch of sky overhead from which the light of day quickly faded. From the depths of precipitous gorges there rose up to them the sullen growling of the icy mountain torrents. And then, one day, they would see outspread beneath them the fair plain of Silesia. . . . Airy and spacious under the morning sun it stretched away — gone were the mountain shadows with which they had lived for days, gone

were the dank rocky walls rearing up to right and left of the road — ahead was sunlight and a vast green valley, across which the mountain streams, liberated from their tortuous reverberating chasms, wandered silent and shining to the great sweep of the horizon.

XIX

One big battle — and it shall be when the Austrians emerge from these mountains! For large Austrian forces have concentrated at Olmutz, and are said to be now on the way to Silesia.

Frederick's generals wonder why he makes no attempt to guard the passes. But there are so many of these, who could guard them all? Frederick turns a weakness into strength. To Valori, who also is shocked at his seeming neglect, he hints at his scheme.

"When one wishes to catch the mouse," he says, "one does not shut the trap. One leaves it open."

Deceive the enemy with false information as Cæsar so often did. . . . Pretend to retreat, yes, seem to be fearful of an invasion of Brandenburg. . . . He gives orders for the archives to be moved from Berlin to Stettin, knowing that spies will carry this news quickly to exultant Vienna. Traun he might not be able to fool, but the Marshal is no longer in command — he is miles away in Transylvania, and the Court favorite, Prince Charles, has the army again.

It will come through the mountain passes near Schweidnitz. . . . Like the Gauls used to come through the Alps to invade Italy. . . . He will conceal his own army along the foothills, and wait to destroy them as they come out, like the Romans did the Barbarians.

Even Frederick's instructions to his cavalry show how much his thoughts are with Cæsar these days. As the Roman did

before Pharsalia he instructs the cavalrymen to aim all their blows at the face.

On the height near Hohenfriedberg he waits, watching the mountains through a telescope. Scouts bring him each day information upon the Austrian advance through the mountains.

Nearer they come . . . nearer. . . .

XX

On a distant hilltop, while Frederick watches the mountains for the mouse, a curious not undramatic scene is being enacted.

A company of soldiers is drawn up in line of battle. These are the French. Another company wearing a different uniform appears over the brow of the hill. These are the English.

As soon as they see the French, the English officers take off their hats. The French officers return the compliment.

An Englishman — his name is Lord Charles Hay — steps forward. He says gallantly, and politely —

"Monsieur, bid your people fire!"

The French fire first? Never! "*Non, monsieur, nous ne tirons jamais les premiers* — we *never* fire first!" replies the Marquis d'Auteroche, with equal gallantry.

With another bow, an expression of slight chagrin on his face, Lord Charles turns to his men and gives the command to fire at the French, drawn up at attention twenty paces away, waiting to be shot at first.

When the smoke clears away half of the French company lies dead. The battle of Fontenoy has begun.

Louis XV has again left his bedchamber to show gallantry on the battlefield, and stands on a hill with the Dauphin watching the battle.

There is an old man, half eaten up by syphilis, but still active-brained, who is carried back and forth about the battlefield in

a wicker chair. He has a lead bullet in his mouth, and keeps biting on it to relieve his pain. This is the famous Maréchal de Saxe, the actual working commander of the French.

The English column beats back the French, and victory seems theirs when an officer in the Irish Brigade goes up to Marshal Richelieu and suggests bringing up certain cannon ahead of the English. His name is Count Lally.

Richelieu to the King on the hill. . . . The King graciously giving his permission. . . . Defeat turned into victory.

Louis steps down from the hilltop, and kisses the old man chewing on the lead bullet.

The glorious French victory of Fontenoy, won by Louis XV in person. Voltaire, desirous of the Bourbon's favor, writes a poem about it, which sells twenty-one thousand copies the first day.

A French messenger, the Chevalier de la Tour, brings news of this great victory won by his royal master over the English to that other king who is watching the mountains so closely through the telescope. Frederick shows no enthusiasm over his ally's success. What use indeed is this Fontenoy victory to him? He exclaims angrily —

"A battle fought on the banks of the Scamander, or the capture of Pekin, would be just about as useful to me!"

May the Chevalier wait and have the honor of watching the King of Prussia win one of *his* great victories? . . . Yes, he may. . . . But Frederick knows the real reason why the Chevalier has been told to stay. If he loses, the French mean to abandon the King of Prussia to his fate.

XXI

A cloud of dust rises along the line of hills. They come! They come!

The grand Austrian army sent by Maria Theresa to recapture Silesia, and when they have done this to follow the bad man into the fastnesses of his own bleak Brandenburg and capture him alive in Berlin, streamed out on to the Silesian plain with its field music playing, and colors flying. At night the thousands of campfires made an equally imposing sight in the darkness.

As the Austrians came out of the mountains they saw below them a few horses' tails vanishing into the foothills, and recognized Prussian hussars — evidently a few left behind by the bad man to keep watch — scampering away. They had been completely deceived by the false information distributed abroad by Frederick — believed him to be in rapid retreat — and saw the promised land lying before them as good as conquered already.

But like the Gauls leaving the passes of the Alps they are watched. . . . They think the Prussians miles away, and Prussian eyes are on them. . . . The Prussian army has strict orders not to show itself, as success depends entirely on surprise. Frederick has even forbidden smoking.

Surprise! — First a cavalry charge to throw them into confusion, then an infantry attack. — No firing before a hundred and fifty paces.

The surprise is complete. Prince Charles is still asleep when the attack starts. In five hours the whole Austrian army is in full flight back into the mountains. Hohenfriedberg is Frederick's first victory where the Prussian loss in men killed and wounded is appreciably less than the Austrian. Chasot's dragoon regiment alone captures sixty-seven pairs of colors.

A victory great as a Cæsar's! — He exclaims joyfully —

"The world reposes not more safely upon the shoulders of Atlas than Prussia upon such an army!"

No sooner is the battle over than Frederick drops the sword and takes up the pen. He writes a poem about it. He also writes a poem which contains in it the names of all the officers in the regiment which has shown the most conspicuous bravery. He himself designs a new coat of arms for Chasot containing the number 67 and the name Hohenfriedberg, and he sends a snuff box and a personal note to Chasot's mother.

Such bravery is what he wants emulated. His brain to think out the plan . . . the bravery and discipline of his soldiers to put it into execution for him. On the retreat from Silesia Frederick had honored a Prussian major conspicuously gallant in holding back the harassing Pandours, by giving him the title of the Prussian Leonidas.

Where is the Chevalier? Frederick gives the French envoy the following note for his Bourbon master —

"I have paid at Hohenfriedberg the bill which you drew upon me at Fontenoy."

XXII

Now follow them! Utterly destroy these Gauls as they flee, a disorganized rabble, back the way they came! Drive them down into Bohemia, and so lay waste that province that no Austrian army will ever be able to use it again as a base for attack.

But Frederick has delayed too long writing poetry. It is easy to say — Annihilate them! but the Austrians are well in the mountains now. The sky opens in a deluge upon the pursuing Prussians. "Twelve hours of continuous rain!" reports fat wet Valori.

Frederick's position after the victory of Hohenfriedberg was by no means secure. The Hungarians were invading upper Silesia, the Saxons were threatening Brandenburg. Austrian

influence and English gold were busily at work to elect Maria Theresa's husband emperor.

The grim satisfaction he derives from the Austrian corpses littering the roads by which he pursues is modified by mortification due to his own losses through the Pandours.

The two armies, the one in flight, the other pursuing, reach the top of the watershed. Now the streams flow to the Elbe instead of the Oder. Down below there lie Austrian forts. For Frederick it is the hostile land from which he has already once been driven.

The Austrian army crawls in between the Elbe and the Adler and stays there. With the two rivers protecting it, Frederick cannot drive it out. He crosses the Elbe and goes into camp at the village of Chlum.

Since Hohenfriedberg a month has passed. It is now the end of July. Three months of good weather may still be expected, but already to the Prussian army, on enemy territory, the coming winter looms up menacingly. Both armies devastate the Bohemian countryside, the Austrians to make it increasingly difficult for the enemy to stay on, Frederick to do all the damage he can before winter forces him to leave.

Six weeks of sitting opposite each other. Every five days food convoys arrive for Frederick from Silesia. Then there are skirmishes between Prussian and Austrian cavalry detachments. But little else happens, except other skirmishes over forage. "For hay and glory we fight splendidly," says a Prussian officer.

The two armies begin to fraternize. One day three young princes meet and chat in no-man's land. They are Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick and his brother Albert, with the Prussians — and Ludwig who serves with the Austrians.

To deal with the Hungarians and the Saxons Frederick has had to detach troops. Are the eighteen thousand men left

enough for him to stay on in Bohemia, now that Maria Theresa has sent Prince Charles reinforcements so that he has now an army of forty thousand men? The greater resources of Austria, slowly getting into motion, are beginning to tell against Frederick. And again overbold, he has followed the Austrians too far south.

XXIII

The feeling that he was doing the fighting for both himself and France angered Frederick. This bigoted sensual Bourbon fool without ability, only lucky in that he was born King of France! During these months when he was camped opposite Prince Charles in Bohemia Frederick was lamenting to himself his own bad fortune in having been born monarch of so small a country as Prussia. He knew that he had infinite ability compared with Louis, and pinched for money and men, he dreamed of what he could do with thirty instead of three million subjects and the revenues of France.

He needed men badly and he asked the Bourbon for them. But Louis had not been pleased by that sneer about Pekin, duly reported to him. Frederick should learn how to write to a real King. He was sorry, but he could send none. Then Frederick tried to get money out of him. "If your Majesty cannot furnish me with any reinforcements, you must at least send me funds to raise additional troops. The smallest possible sum which will enable me to maintain my position here is three million dollars."

Impatiently, he awaited a reply. Fat Valori, the French ambassador, could not meet the King's angry eyes. The reply came. To Louis, with many bills to meet, three millions seemed a lot of money. A hint between the lines that thrifty Prussians would not know what to do with so much. He would try to make Frederick an allowance of a hundred thousand dollars a month.

Frederick's inferiority complex broke loose as he exclaimed —

"Such a paltry sum might perhaps with propriety be offered to a petty duke of Hesse-Darmstadt — but it is not suitable to make such a proposition to the King of Prussia!"

Here was a remark not calculated to make the King of Prussia any the more popular with those very German princelings he was trying to organize into a confederation, of which he meant to be the head.

The sister who spends a week worrying over whether or not she is going to be offered an armchair by the Empress, and the brother who exclaims this about petty dukes of Hesse-Darmstadt, have much in common.

Frederick could not take out his anger on distant Louis. He could on nearby fat Valori. According to how he felt at the moment he either glared at the French ambassador or refused to notice him at all.

XXIV

August, 1745.

An Englishman named Robinson arrives in Austria, and on the second of the month he has an interview with a lady.

She is very reserved. One could not imagine this dignified woman galloping madly up a hill at Pressburg at the head of wild nobles, yet she has done this. Her lips are set tightly. She fixes Robinson with a steady disconcerting stare as he talks, but says nothing. He has never seen her so quiet before.

The French have won that unfortunate battle of Fontenoy. The Dutch are getting out of the war. England is threatened with a serious Jacobite rebellion in Scotland. Next thing the French will be marching on Vienna. Can Silesia ever be reconquered — would it not be better to make peace with him by giving it up?

Then Maria Theresa speaks.

"It would be easier for me to make peace with France than with that bad man. What good indeed could possibly come now from a peace with him? I must have Silesia again. . . . Without Silesia the imperial sceptre is but a bauble. . . . Would you have us sway that sceptre under the guardianship of Prussia?" A contemptuous smile.

"Prince Charles is now in a condition to fight the Prussians again," she continues. "Give me until October. Until after another battle do not speak to me of peace. You say that if we make peace with Prussia, he will give his vote for the Grand Duke as emperor. The Grand Duke is not so ambitious of an empty honor as to engage in it under his tutelage! Consider, farther, the imperial dignity — is this compatible with the loss of Silesia? One more battle I demand!"

Robinson murmurs about subsidies. Already this year the English people have paid out two million dollars. They want something in return — most of all, peace.

"A battle, Madam, if won, will not reconquer Silesia. If lost, your Majesty is ruined at home."

The Queen of Hungary replies angrily —

"One more battle! If I had to agree with him tomorrow, I would try him in battle this evening."

The result of this conversation is that the English make peace with Frederick separately on the twenty-sixth. The terms of the Hanover Convention are for Frederick the same as those of the Peace of Breslau. The English recognize Silesia as his.

XXV

It was in camp at Chlum that Frederick received the results of the imperial election. Seven out of the nine electoral votes had gone to Grand Duke Franz. This was Germany's answer to

his suggestion that Berlin replace Vienna as capital of the Empire.

Two weeks later came the coronation. Maria Theresa went to Frankfort to see her husband crowned. He would be only a figurehead, she the real emperor. The Grand Duke was only interested in making money out of army contracts. She took the title of Empress-Queen.

At Frankfort Frederick was talked about. He had some ability, admitted Maria Theresa, but certainly no character. He was godless and mocking, in some respects no better than a common thief, altogether a thoroughly bad man, who, if there existed such things, ought to be in some royal house of correction.

"I will as soon part with my petticoats as with Silesia," she said.

She was in an exultant mood. She meant to cut short the King of Prussia's ambitions, and at the same time to show up the cowardly English. Two very high court dignitaries, a prince and a duke, appeared daily on the hill opposite Frederick's camp and stood there, long-bearded and earnest, looking at him through a telescope like learned astronomers. They were the envoys sent by Maria Theresa to urge Prince Charles to do something, and quickly.

September had come. Frederick's convoys from Silesia were being seriously menaced by the Hungarian Pandours. Prince Charles's army was daily getting larger. There was nothing left him but retreat.

An opportune moment to slip away was when the Austrian army was celebrating the Grand Duke's election. While the singing, drunken yelling, shooting off of cannon, all the details of the *feu-de-joie,* were at their height, the Prussian army began its retreat to Silesia.

Now it became the Austrians' turn to follow. They glided through the forest and took Frederick by surprise early one

morning — the last day of September. In this attack he was outnumbered two to one.

This battle of the Sohr was the time when Prince Charles came nearest to winning a victory. The idea of the surprise attack was good, but in the execution it fell down. The part of the Austrian army detailed to fall on the rear of the Prussian camp broke ranks to loot and rape the women camp followers. The old Duke d'Ahremberg who commanded one division went to a wrong hill several miles away and, mixed up in his sense of direction, by mistake drew up his division with its back towards Frederick.

The battle of the Sohr ended in a victory for Frederick but this victory was a qualified one for the losses in men were equal, and his baggage and war chest had all been looted by the Austrians. They stole even his books, flutes and greyhounds. He lamented the loss of his travelling library most.

"I have lost everything," he wrote to Duhan. "Be so good as to buy me a Boileau — the handsome octavo edition with notes — also Bossuet's introduction to universal history, Cicero's Tusculan Questions, etc. I dare say you will find them all in the library of my dear Jordan."

But who can blame him for this defeat? To Fredersdorf, Frederick writes —

"Only think how we have fought — eighteen to fifty. My whole equipage has gone to the devil."

Again and again during the battle of the Sohr Frederick was in grave personal danger. Men fell, dead and wounded, all around the King of Prussia — he stayed without a scratch.

"Never in my life have I been in such danger as on the thirtieth," he writes to Berlin, "and yet I escaped untouched. Look you, no ball does me harm!"

At this battle occurred an event that he might have read of in Plutarch. Pandours, during the battle, surrounding the tent

of fat Valori, would have captured him except for the presence of mind of a secretary named D'Arget, who impersonated his master and was taken captive instead. Loyal, quick-witted men such as this are the ones Frederick wishes to surround his own person. He takes over D'Arget as another reader and literary secretary.

XXVI

No ball can touch him, but Frederick, like the Pharaohs and Roman Cæsars he has read about, is not neglecting to have his tomb built for him during his lifetime.

The situation is near Potsdam. Here the King of Prussia has had a vineyard of six terraces laid out. To have his tomb placed in a vineyard is surely as original as having a big voluptuous bed conceal a library.

Throughout his campaigns Frederick was always anxious not to be mistaken for a common general. There was no Glory in being just another Charles XII.

"You may be certain that the life I am leading has changed neither my character nor my way of thinking," he assured Voltaire. On his trips back to Berlin he carried his victories lightly, and was first the philosopher.

When, following his victory at Sohr, he put his army for the winter in Silesia, and returned to his capital, he seemed only to think of the arts and sciences, of reading papers before the Academy he had founded, writing French verses, planning for picture galleries and theatres in Berlin, and playing the flute at his daily concerts.

One day, walking in his vineyard with a friend, the Marquis D'Argens, he said casually, pointing to the tomb, "*Quand je serai là, je serai sans souci.*" "When I am there I shall at last be free from care."

Here is a king who does not need to reach Solomon's age to

realize that all is vanity — at thirty-three he sees through life's illusions, and craves the peace of the grave.

He is having a house built in the vineyard, facing the tomb — a house smaller and more personal than a palace, where he can have his books and play his flute remote from the noisy world — the Pleasure House in the King's Vineyard it is at first called. A grave and a pleasure house both in a vineyard — are not these more original than the stereotyped vaults of the Romans along the Appian Way? Here is an idea that should get him talked about in the Paris salons, that should make an impression on Voltaire. The furniture he orders from Paris.

Frederick, who wants to be the directing mind in everything, designs this house himself. When the architect employed to carry out his ideas suggests some changes which will make the building dryer and at the same time improve its appearance Frederick petulantly gives the job to another man who by such suggestions will not imply that the King of Prussia may be in a field that he knows little about.

The Pleasure House in the King's Vineyard has a classic ring to it, but is too long. One day Frederick thinks of a better name.

Simply, *Sans Souci.*

XXVII

By this time the world knows that Frederick is never going to have any children. He has given his eldest brother the title of Prince of Prussia, thus recognizing him as the heir presumptive, and in the autumn of 1744 when August William has a son, the succession is made sure of for another generation.

Of brothers and sisters living, Frederick now had eight. His mother actually gave birth to sixteen children, but the others had died. After his own birth there had come a number of girls — Frederika Louisa, Charlotte, Sophie Dorothée Maria,

Louisa Ulrique — then a brother, August William — then another girl, Anna Amelia — finally his two youngest brothers, Frederick Henry and August Ferdinand.

Their father had married off four of the girls — Wilhelmine to the Margrave of Bayreuth, Frederika Louisa to the Margrave of Ansbach, Charlotte to the Duke of Brunswick (brother to the princess forced upon Frederick), Sophie Dorothée Maria to the Margrave of Schwedt. Frederick arranged a marriage between Louisa Ulrique and the heir to the throne of Sweden; Amelia, after an unfortunate love affair, became an abbess.

Frederick's brothers, August William and Prince Henry, went with him on his campaigns. The Prince of Prussia was now twenty-three, and Henry nineteen. Frederick mentioned when he wrote to Berlin after the battle of Hohenfriedberg that both the Princes were safe.

They did not like Frederick. He wanted to control all their actions for them as the father had done his. He forced them both to make marriages that were distasteful to them.

Prince Henry, very effeminate in manner and appearance, had the reputation of being " Potzdamiste " like Frederick.

It was not with love that any of them, brothers or sisters, looked up to the autocratic young " Head of the Family."

XXVIII

While Frederick is in Berlin playing the flute, a man named Brühl is busy in Saxony, plotting his immediate destruction.

This man is not much to look at without his clothes, but then it would break his heart to be seen in such a condition. Brühl thinks a great deal about clothes. He has, in fact, a different suit for every day of the year. Twelve tailors sew for him steadily.

Every morning the Master of Brühl's Wardrobe ushers into

him the boss tailor, who submits to Brühl, as he has his breakfast in bed, an idea for a new suit. This idea having been approved or disapproved by him, Brühl attends to the business of the day. He is Count Brühl, the King of Poland's prime minister.

Brühl dislikes Frederick. He is strongly opposed to Frederick's conception of a federation of German princes and a joint German army to keep foreigners out of the Empire, as he surmises that Prussia means to take the place of Austria in this arrangement.

This would not suit Count Brühl at all. He too likes to have a finger in everything. "From the highest affairs of the state down to operas and hunting everything here is in Count Brühl's immediate charge," the English minister in Dresden writes home. "His expenses are immense. He keeps three hundred servants, and as many horses. It is said, and I believe it, that he takes money for everything the King disposes of in Poland, where they frequently have very great employments to bestow." Brühl can handle his own master very well. He simply dangles before Augustus constantly the truth that—"Public affairs, your Majesty, will carry themselves on, provided we do not trouble ourselves too much about them." But the energetic young King of Prussia, who wants to dictate to the other German States, is obviously not an Augustus.

Rumors have also reached his ears that the wise-cracking young King of Prussia calls him a clothes-horse.

As he puts on and takes off suits Brühl's mind is active. A plan for partitioning Prussia? . . . An attack to be made this winter when Frederick thinks the war discontinued until the spring? . . . One army cutting off the Prussians in Silesia from Brandenburg, another making a drive from Saxony direct on Berlin? . . . A little too tight in the seat here, tailor, better let them out a couple of inches.

Brühl is persistent — he has a mind that when it gets an idea into it will no more let it go than he would abandon the suit-a-day idea — but he has one weakness, he talks a little too much.

He invites to dinner one night Wolfstierna, the Swedish minister in Dresden, and a Rudenskjold, the Swedish minister in Berlin, who happens to be visiting him. As he drinks he begins talking about the young King of Prussia's boundless ambitions, the insolent way in which he marched his army through Saxony. At first his remarks confine themselves to a general censure of Frederick's conduct, then, as he remembers the clothes-horse reports, he loses all caution and soon is unfolding to the two Swedes his whole scheme for revenge.

But the Courts of Prussia and Sweden are friendly since Frederick's sister Ulrique a few months ago married the heir to the Swedish throne, and Rudenskjold, when he returns to Berlin, tells Frederick all.

XXIX

A dastardly plot to destroy him! A plan for partitioning Prussia — confiscating his kingly title — *reducing him to mere Margrave of Brandenburg!*

Move first! Before Saxony can invade Brandenburg, invade Saxony! Keep the war always on foreign soil!

But when Frederick entered upon this winter campaign of 1745 he did so very reluctantly. He had won two victories — Hohenfriedberg and Sohr — but they had cost him dear. Sohr had been a victory only in name, though he had remained on the battlefield five days to prove possession. The treasure chest of nearly a million dollars had been stolen, and an immense amount of equipment destroyed.

But Brandenburg to be invaded from two points! He saw at first only disaster. Then he realized how he could turn this invasion to his own ends, by having it definitely change the

sentiment of the country's pro-Austrian element. His invasion of Silesia — that striking of the first blow against Austria when the Emperor died — had made him unpopular, and now was his chance to win back public opinion. Frederick exploited to the utmost the rumored invasion and appeared in the light of defender of Prussia.

Again Frederick placed his faith in acting quickly. Though England had made peace with him, English gold had bought up the Czarina Elizabeth, and she warned him that if he invaded Saxony it meant war with Russia. He was not to be over-awed by sheer size. He knew it would take Russia at least six months to put an army in the field. If he meanwhile captured Dresden, would that army ever march?

Again he remembered the *Commentaries*. He feigned the greatest fear. He told everybody he was going to Silesia to get his army and bring it back to Brandenburg to protect his country from the threatened invasion — actually it was destined for Saxony. He again gave orders to have the archives shifted to Stettin, and told his mother and wife they had better leave too. All this false information was carried to the Saxons and put them off their guard, while at home it emphasized Frederick's position as no longer a young Alexander out for conquests, but now protector of the fatherland.

Old Leopold had command of the army marching from Brandenburg into Saxony. He took with him all the troops except five thousand left to guard the city. Frederick, marching from Silesia to join him at Dresden, became angry with the old man for moving so slowly. Did the old general contemplate treachery? The Prince of Anhalt-Dessau simply could not be made to move fast. Also what precedent was there for this invasion! Frederick's audacity always took away the breath of his generals. Perhaps the Prince deliberately advanced slowly hoping for some diplomatic development that would stop the

war. But in December, at Kesselsdorf, a suburb of Dresden, he finally attacked the Saxons, fortified in a strong position on a hill.

The old inventor of iron ramrods was religious in a rough superstitious way. He always took off his hat before a battle and said a prayer. It could do no harm, and might do good. Now standing bareheaded, he said reverently —

"O God, help me in the coming battle. Please do not allow me to be disgraced in my old age. But if you won't help me, don't help those Saxon sons-of-bitches!"

He waves his hat, and the Prussian infantry begins to advance up the hill on which the Saxons have placed their batteries.

The hillside is snow-covered. The snow packs under the feet of the Prussians, becomes a slide on the steep grade. Under the terrible fire of the Saxon batteries they stumble and slip. . . . And finally give way.

God, instead of remaining neutral, seems to have taken sides. But again the old man mutters his prayer and waves his hat, and up the Prussians go again.

Again they have to fall back down.

But now a battalion of Austrians fighting with the Saxons shout — Victory! — and leaving their cover come running down the hill — Quick! hurl cavalry against them!

The Prussian cavalry charges. The Saxons become demoralized. The Prussian infantry rallies. Old Leopold's son, Moritz, leads a charge which takes the hill.

A complete victory for Leopold. Prince Charles had arrived in Dresden the night before with Austrian aid for the Saxons, but had delayed until too late effecting a juncture. Only one Austrian battalion arrived, and this was the one that first cried Victory and started the Saxons running at the wrong moment.

Frederick at Meissen heard the firing. Next day he met Old Leopold at Wilsdruf.

He was not going to be outdone by the Bourbon who had kissed Marshal Saxe. Dismounting from his horse, he advanced to meet the old Dessauer with doffed hat and open arms. —

"Your Highness shall conduct me over the battlefield!"

They went over it together. Leopold pointed out the hillside that had so nearly proved fatal . . . the Saxon gun positions . . . where the cavalry made their charge . . . just the spot where he was standing when he got the first of three bullets through his coat.

As the young King and the old general rode about the battlefield discussing military details of the victory, they passed women of Dresden searching for fathers, brothers and sons among the dead.

XXX

On the eighteenth of December the Prussian army entered Dresden.

Dresden was not Vienna but it was by far the most important town Frederick had yet captured. He had little dreamed when he came here as a youth of sixteen with his father, that he would one day enter it as a conqueror. He made a point of being a generous conqueror, but it was here, in one enemy capital, if he could not do so in Vienna, that he insisted on peace being signed. Old Count Harrach, the Chancellor of Bohemia, had to come over the mountains to sign for Maria Theresa.

On the twenty-fifth of December, it was signed — the Peace of Dresden. Like a Roman emperor he distributed bread, and gave great public entertainments. The Pagan king again had *Te Deum* sung in the church of the Holy Cross.

XXXI

The homecoming.

A Roman triumph subdued by Christianity, with some features of a Guild festival of the Middle Ages. Berlin in terror for weeks at the imminence of invasion, with a militia drilling, goes wild with joy now that the young King has defeated the enemy on foreign territory.

Crowds on horseback and in carriages go out for miles in the country to meet Frederick and escort him to the capital.

The city militia companies form a double file from the gate by which he enters to the palace. . . . Windows and rooftops crowded. . . . Ahead of the procession a hundred postilions blowing horns. . . . These are followed by the butchers on horseback.

Women strewing the road ahead of him with flowers. . . . Laurel wreaths fluttering down from the windows into his carriage.

But short Prussian jackets instead of flowing togas. No imposing platform display of spoils — Brühl's suits, for instance, hanging one behind the other in endless exhibition for the public to feast its eyes upon — Brühl himself, naked in a cage, or chained to a wheel.

Before the palace are grouped young tradesmen carrying white banners with burning hearts on them and the inscription — *Sic Ardet Pro Rege!*

The Brandenburgers shout —

"Long live Frederick the Great!"

XXXII

How much of a thrill does he get out of it?

Frederick, from his carriage, bows to right and left, saying

to the struggling mob, "Don't hurt yourselves, my children! — Take care of the horses!"

The reception pleases him, and he likes to be called the Great — if it were only the Romans or the French shouting, instead of these Brandenburgers!

Five years ago he came to the throne — six months after that he was starting out on his first war — now he has won five battles and is called the Great. Still, still — ?

He does not really care what the provincial Germans think. The important question is — what does France, what will posterity, think?

This second war had taught Frederick something. He had learned that he could not depend on the support of the German princelings. At any moment, warring with Austria, France his ally, if he became too powerful, might change sides to help crush him. In the military department had he perhaps achieved sufficient Glory? Before another whirlwind of events carried him off with less fortunate results might it not be well to shine as Philosopher?

Frederick did not fear death on the battlefield, but like Voltaire he never believed he would live to see old age. He wanted to survive as Man of Thought as well as Man of Action.

"I want to have something from life," he said angrily to the French, when they tried to persuade him not to make the Peace of Dresden.

He was, perhaps, beginning to realize, if he would not admit, some limitations of his nature. That the impetuosity, which brought him success in quick brusque military movements, worked against him in diplomacy — his reckless epigrams and personal remarks making for him dangerous enemies. That Prussia itself was really too small for him to continue making conquests. Now had he only been born King of France, how different the story might be!

Besides what did Cæsar do when he returned from the Gallic wars? — He wrote his *Commentaries.* — Frederick was impatient to resume his own literary work.

His fear of dying before he really arrived as a Man of Thought was intensified by the number of his friends who had died recently. Both Jordan and Keyserling died during the second Silesian War. Now his old tutor, Duhan de Jandun, who had returned to Prussia upon Frederick's accession, lay dying.

Frederick went to see Duhan the night of his triumphal homecoming. Splendid uniforms filled the humble little room where the old tutor lay at the point of death. For Frederick, on a chair at the head of the bed, looking down at the man who had been so much to him in his youth, there rose up fragmentary memories of the past.

Wusterhausen. How he hated it and used to slip away from the swine hunts to play his flute or talk to Duhan about France and poetry. Now he has given the castle to his brother, the Prince of Prussia.

The day when his father returned unexpectedly to the palace and found him studying Latin.

His cadets, that he so hated to drill. Now he has become a sterner drillmaster than his father. But then it was being ordered about that he hated; he rather likes doing the ordering himself.

So many memories of the past which are revived by the sight of the man who lies here dying.

But everything has changed. The death of his old tutor fails to stir Frederick deeply. People may think him mournful with genuine sentiment but actually this is not the case. He almost wonders at it himself.

But what was that he wrote to Voltaire?

"We must adapt ourselves to our station in life, and make our duties a pleasure."

He sits at Duhan's bedside looking very grave, princes and generals grouped around him. Outside the shouts of the drunken crowd, the lights of the town. That the conquering hero should have left all this gaiety to come to the bedside of an old dying tutor makes the impression he wants.

" It was an affecting sight," remembers one courtier who was present, " to see a dying man in the midst of a brilliant illumination, surrounded by princes, and visited by a triumphant monarch, who in the midst of the incessant clamor of exultation, sought only to alleviate the sick man's pangs, to participate in his distress, and to reflect upon the vanity of all human grandeur."

The old man thinks he has been neglected. Did he not write complaining letters continually from Memel, and later from the Brunswick court? He had not dared come back to Prussia while Frederick William lived.

All this Duhan's dying eyes reproach him with even now. Like the many others Duhan thinks more should have been done for him.

" No, I cannot bear it any longer! " Frederick exclaims suddenly, and putting his hand to his face in a gesture of sorrow, hurries from the room.

He is glad to be out in the open air again.

XXXIII

When the French persist in trying to keep him in the war, which in the beginning he started, Frederick loses patience.

He is through with war, through with it! " I would not stir if I saw Prince Charles at the gates of Paris! "

" And your Majesty would see us at the gates of Vienna with the same indifference? " inquires the French envoy.

With exactly the same! The philosopher in Frederick speaks, when after delivering the envoy a lecture upon the crime of war — its futility and sordidness — he finishes —

"What are we, poor human atoms, to get up projects that cost so much blood? — Let us live, and help to live!"

Part Five

THE PHILOSOPHER OF SANS SOUCI

I

WHEN he made the Peace of Dresden Frederick was by no means under the illusion that it would be a permanent peace. He was quite in agreement with the French envoy that as long as Maria Theresa lived she would never abandon hope of recovering Silesia.

But many things might happen. Even the haughty Queen of Hungary was mortal. Maria Theresa might die. Or if she lived, what then?

"I am not in alarm about the Austrians," said Frederick. "They dread my armies, and the luck I have had. I am sure of their sitting quiet for the dozen years or so which may remain to me of life." The Saxons? "I have put Saxony out of condition to do me harm. She now owes me twelve and a half million dollars. Also by the defensive alliance I make with her I provide myself with a help against Austria."

Frederick himself had discovered the secret of offsetting quickly the damages done by war. "These can soon be repaired by a provident administration," he wrote. Bourbon misgovernment in times of peace did far more harm than a war. By managing his country well he could in a short time have back again the money and men which the two Silesian wars had cost him.

Or he might himself die. Frequent utterances of Frederick at the age of thirty-four show that he did not believe he would live

long. And did he really care what happened to Prussia after him?

"Those that come after me can do as they like," he said indifferently. "The future is beyond man's reach. I have acquired Silesia — it is up to my successors to keep it."

He is far more concerned with his own personal Glory than with the future of Prussia. He knows that the conquests made by Alexander were lost by those who came after — this had not made Alexander the less great in history. To flash meteor-like through Europe of his time is Frederick's ambition, even though after that flight there comes for Prussia chaos and darkness.

II

Though on the surface so different — and though he thought himself so infinitely different — there was then at bottom not so much to choose between the Philosopher-King of Prussia and the self-indulgent Louis XV he so despised.

"It will last my time," says Louis, when the terrible state of France is called to his attention. — "Those that come after me can do as they like," says Frederick, willing to let others shoulder the consequences of his desire for Glory.

Each, in the final analysis, showed the same indifference to the masses. Louis, a sensualist, lived only to satisfy his lust for women, Frederick, unquestionably by this time impotent, sought instead Glory. But where the Bourbon was frankly out for himself, the Hohenzollern concealed an equal self-centeredness behind a screen of humanitarianism and benevolence.

These two contemporary kings were almost the same age. Louis was two years older than Frederick. They mutually disliked each other. Louis looked upon Frederick as an upstart and a hypocrite, Frederick jeered at Louis as stupid and bigoted. At Versailles the reign of Madame de Pompadour was beginning.

Frederick despised the King of France for allowing his political actions to be dictated by mistresses, and called Madame de Pompadour Principal Petticoat Number Three. Louis in return was contemptuous of Frederick, crediting the rumors that the King of Prussia was a degenerate. He looked upon Frederick as having a worse vice than himself—the King of France might like women a little too much, but he had not yet taken to boys.

They were both little men. Frederick was under average height while Louis was almost a dwarf.

III

The Pleasure Palace in the King's Vineyard is nearing completion. When the furniture arrives from Paris, Frederick moves into Sans Souci, and here he lives off and on during the ten years of peace between the Second Silesian and the Seven Years war. To the *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg,* and many volumes of verse that he gets out now, he signs himself—the Philosopher of Sans Souci.

Free from Care! The name which really had its origin in the thought expressed to the Marquis D'Argens that only when laid in his tomb here would he be rid of the troubles that weigh him down, takes on a new meaning for the outside world. Sans Souci is the Philosopher King of Prussia's retreat from the world—here, in his circle of poets and philosophers, the warrior who at the age of thirty-four has won five victories, finds the happiness which nothing else can give him.

At times frank about his personal ambition, his desire for Glory, Frederick, at others, seeks to conceal this. One moment contemptuous of Voltaire's opinion as that of a mere thinker not doer, the next he craves the Frenchman's approbation, and dreads Voltaire's thinking he is doing the commonplace thing

and succumbing to Glory. Frederick still wants to show a versatility greater than Voltaire's. His tendency to be encyclopedic in conversation has already been noticed. He studies to surpass Voltaire in the field of thought, as he has surpassed all competitors in the field of action.

The plans for Sans Souci were first sketched by Frederick between the First and Second Silesian wars. The foundation stone was laid on April 14th, 1745, when he was having such a hard time with the Pandours at Neisse. A year after the peace of Dresden it was ready for occupancy. In May 1747, Frederick gave a housewarming to two hundred people — he slept here his first night on May 19th.

Like Rheinsberg and Wilhelmine's Hermitage, Sans Souci abounded in classic allusions. Facing the window at which Frederick wrote, so that he could rest his eyes on it occasionally, was the enigmatic sex figure of the beautiful androgynous Greek boy. A mile away, convenient to the Philosopher of Sans Souci, were the great Potsdam barracks and parade ground.

IV

In his vineyard he strolls with his group, most of them French but including one Italian, and once in a while a German.

Frederick considers his most important acquisition thus far to be the scientist Maupertuis. Maupertuis was once Madame du Châtelet's mathematics teacher. He was lionized in Paris when he returned from a trip to Lapland where he had made measurements for computing the shape of the earth at the poles. A thick-set hard-drinking Frenchman with a red nose and a red wig.

Then there is La Mettrie, Frederick's reader. He is a big blustering man educated for the priesthood who has become a French army surgeon, and an author. A book called

The Man-Machine, written to prove that man had no soul, attracted Frederick's attention to him.

There is Major Chasot, who perhaps saved Frederick from capture at Mollwitz. He too plays the flute.

There is D'Arget, the attaché to the French ambassador, whose presence of mind in getting himself taken prisoner at the battle of Sohr instead of Valori, had so pleased Frederick. He, like La Mettrie, reads to Frederick, does secretarial work, and makes himself generally useful.

Of this intimate circle is also the Irish-Frenchman, Lord Tyrconnel, an enormous eater, who dies from devouring a huge eagle pie.

The Marquis D'Argens is the King of Prussia's agent in luring French artists and poets to Prussia. He has written several books — *Jewish Letters* — *Chinese Letters* — and has a wide acquaintance in French theatrical circles.

The lone Italian is Signor Algarotti, distinguished author of *Newtonianismo per le Donne* — Newton for the Ladies.

Frederick's brother, Prince Henry, who takes female parts in the theatricals, old Baron Pöllnitz, Marshal Keith, and the French minister Valori, also come to Sans Souci whenever the King invites them.

Frederick is only at Sans Souci intermittently. He spends some time in the big Berlin and Potsdam palaces, and also rushes around the country a great deal holding reviews and manoeuvres from which all foreigners are rigidly excluded. To this group of friends he reads his French verses, expounds his philosophy of life, and plays his flute.

Why so few Germans? Frederick, though he may call them his children, does not think much of his countrymen. It is Frenchmen above all he desires to have with him at Sans Souci. French is the language he speaks and writes here. The papers to be read before his Science Academy must always be written

in French. The harder Frederick oppresses his own people to get money and men for his wars the more he despises them for their submission. That very thing he demands of his soldiers — implicit obedience to his will — he is contemptuous of in his companions. He seeks for foreign spirits free and unshackled, and having found them he immediately tries to chain them. To a certain extent Frederick realizes this trait in his character, but he never allows such self-analysis to influence his behavior.

The Germans are only good for peasants and soldiers, the human material which supplies him with money and that mass force he needs to realize his projects. " Under a good administration the damages of war can be quickly repaired." This line is immensely illuminating of Frederick's character, revealing as it does at one and the same time a great shrewdness and a great heartlessness.

" If anyone wants to make a fine dream for himself he has only to fancy himself King of France," Frederick has said.

Sans Souci is Frederick's France in miniature, where the German king surrounds him with the nationality he most admires, and where sooner or later he quarrels with every one of his subjects.

V

He has netted the small fry, but the whale continues to evade him. Alexander had his Aristotle, Augustus his Ovid, Frederick still needs his Voltaire.

That a woman should still be the obstacle!

During the peace between the First and Second Silesian wars, when Frederick was pressing him to come, Voltaire wrote —

" I would be unworthy of being loved by your Majesty if for the sake of the greatest man of his age I deserted another great man who it is true wears a mob-cap but whose heart is mascu-

line as yours, and whose courageous and unshakable friendship during ten years imposes upon me the duty of living near her."

Frederick replied —

" If Paris is the Island of Cytherea you are assuredly the satellite of Venus — you revolve around that planet and follow its course wherever it moves."

It mortified him that for a whole year he should receive not a single poem or play from Voltaire.

" There was a time when I saw them in manuscript," complained the King of Prussia. " Now I hear from others what is said of them, and only receive them after the booksellers have published the second edition."

A fine house, every kind of honor, a pension, he offered them all. He used flattery, and by praising Maupertuis and his other " acquisitions " tried to make the Frenchman jealous. Still Voltaire did not come.

Voltaire was enjoying a brief spell of success at the French Court. He had written a playlet for the Dauphin's wedding, he had at last been elected a member of the Academy. And another woman was responsible for this success! Voltaire had known Madame de Pompadour before she became Petticoat Number Three — with his pen he had helped her then — she in return was helping him now.

Finally, to get Voltaire, the King of Prussia descends to trickery. He and Voltaire have in their correspondence made frequent jokes at the expense of a certain bishop, thought of very highly at Versailles — in one of his letters Voltaire calls the bishop a jackass. Frederick sees his chance.

" Here you have a morsel of a letter of Voltaire's which I beg you will get delivered to the Bishop of Mirepoix in some roundabout way without you or me appearing in the business," he writes to an agent of his in Paris. " My intention is to embroil

Voltaire so thoroughly in France that there will remain no part for him to take but to come to *me*."

But even this does no good. Voltaire's Accessory still holds him back, and he does not come.

VI

Frederick's fear of dying young seemed justified when in February of the year 1747 he had an attack of apoplexy.

There was a rush of blood to his head. He suddenly, as he was talking, sank back insensible.

Through Europe rushed the rumors that the King of Prussia was dying, that he was already dead.

Frederick himself wrote to Voltaire about this attack, the only one of its kind he ever had,

"I thought very seriously that I was about to die, having had an attack of partial apoplexy. My constitution and my age called me back to life."

Frederick was only thirty-five at the time. The usual troubles about which he corresponded with Voltaire were obstruction of the bowels and hemorrhoids.

The rumors of his death were received with the greatest joy in Vienna. Maria Theresa, deeply religious, rejoiced that the hand of God had at last struck down the bad blasphemous man who had stolen her Silesia.

They proved to be without basis in fact. For half an hour Frederick had not been able to talk or to move, but then he was all right again.

VII

While waiting and hoping for Voltaire's arrival, and corresponding with him from Sans Souci, Frederick did not forget Prussia.

Two things he was particularly interested in — reforming the legal system, and building up foreign trade.

In all the Imperial courts lawsuits dragged on for years. Frederick, determined to free Prussia from Austrian influence, was resolved to put a stop to this. He employed for his purpose of giving Prussia a new and independent legal code a jurist named Cocceji. " A man of sterling character, whose qualities would have suited the noble times of the Roman Republic," Frederick calls him.

Speed in law as in war. Put an end, Cocceji, to a state of affairs where a lawsuit never ends. " All lawsuits to be settled within a year," Frederick tells Cocceji. He also tells him to regulate fees. This is a big order for Cocceji to fill.

A *Codex Fredericianus* — the first code attempted since the days of Justinian! This project of Frederick's, admirable in itself, never reached completion.

His second ambition was to give Prussia a merchant marine, and have it become a great colonizing force like Ancient Rome. He made a port of Emden, and took stock in two companies designed to trade with the Far East. The first ship launched — the " King of Prussia " — cleared for India.

This effort to give Prussia markets beyond the Baltic, and to have it compete as a maritime nation with the Dutch whose ships now carried Prussian goods, was also frustrated by the outbreak of the Seven Years War.

In Frederick's peace policy there was one further outstanding item. He sternly prohibited gold and silver leaving the country, and like his father turned all the precious metal that came into his hands into palace ornaments. This was so that in times of necessity during war he could melt up the ornaments and turn them into coins for payment of his troops.

VIII

The habits of the Philosopher-King of Prussia are much talked about in Europe.

He rises, it seems, at three in the summer, at four in the winter. There is no ceremony here of the petit and grand levée, as at formal Versailles. A quarter of an hour before the King is called a fire is lit in his bedroom. Then he gets up.

Why does Frederick rise so early and put in such a full day? He has answered this himself. "Because sleep and inactivity seem to me so like death."

Sitting on the bed he puts on his shirt and breeches, and the rest of his clothes standing before the fire. While his hair is being done into a queue he looks through his mail brought out to Sans Souci the evening before from Berlin, reserving some letters to read himself, and distributing the rest among his secretaries for them to make extracts.

He then washes, or rather dabs at, his face and hands with a wet towel. In the antechamber wait adjutants to hear the army orders for the day, and to receive the parole — they also tell him the names of all strangers who have just departed or arrived, for Frederick is very inquisitive about the visitors to his capital.

The adjutants are dismissed. The King now drinks several glasses of water, looks through the Berlin report and the letters he has kept, and later takes two or three cups of strong coffee.

Now the flute. Several dozen of these are kept in the room. Frederick picks out one from its case and for an hour walks up and down, either playing pieces he knows by heart, or extemporizing — this is the time when his mind is supposed to be revolving his greatest plans.

At nine o'clock — when Louis XV is still in bed with a mistress — the King of Prussia goes into conference with his three secretaries. While laying out the day's work for them he eats

cherries, figs and grapes brought from the royal hothouses or imported from more southern lands, and which he finds help to keep his bowels open.

The secretaries face about and leave. Frederick now has his hair greased and powdered, gives his face and hands another perfunctory dab with the towel, and gets into his uniform. Five minutes he allows for this, when he is not being shaved. Ten o'clock has come. He answers family letters, speaks to people who are here to interview him by appointment, goes to the Potsdam parade-ground, takes a ride on one of his fine strong English stallions.

At twelve he eats. Some light French wine mixed with water is all he usually drinks with the meal. But then he likes greasy indigestible dishes, heavy pasties which counteract completely the beneficial effects of the fruit — he is particularly fond of a polenta made of cheese and corn flour. He stays at the table as long as he has something to talk about.

In the afternoon the flute again and his writing. Besides French verses Frederick is working on a history of his Silesian campaigns, military essays, and philosophical dissertations.

At six the daily concert, with the King of Prussia featured on the flute.

The day is brought to a close with one of the famous Socratic suppers at which it is said he ceases completely to be King, becomes simply one of a congenial supper-party of philosophers and poets, brother-citizen in an intellectual democracy.

A royal twenty-four hours explored by the curious eyes of Europe with unconcealed interest. Not only the beautiful pages, the lack of women at Frederick's court, attract attention by their suggestion of scandal. The many ways in which he is different from other monarchs, and shows originality, are discussed and re-discussed. . . . How the victor of Mollwitz and Hohenfriedberg dresses and undresses himself. . . . His shabby

snuff-stained clothes, and dirty boots. . . . His five duplicate libraries — one at Berlin, a second at Potsdam, the third at Charlottenbourg, the fourth at Sans Souci, and his travelling library — all containing the same books bound in the same red morocco, so that as he moves from place to place he can always pick up his reading just where he left off. . . . His flute playing and fondness for greyhounds. . . . How he sleeps in his hat.

IX

Ten years of peace — and on two continents at the ends of the earth from each other, Fate spinning threads of the great web of destruction in which the Philosopher of Sans Souci and three Queens are to struggle.

Five years before Frederick's birth a monarch who ruled over a territory far vaster than the Holy Roman Empire had died. His name was Aurungzebe, and he was known as the Great Mogul.

The Mogul Empire broke up with Aurungzebe's death, the Indian Rajahs throwing off their allegiance to the Court of Delhi, and the struggle for colonial power between the English and the French commencing. The English were in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. But Dumas, the French governor of Pondichèry, was a man who, like the French governors in Canada, knew better than the English how to get on well with the natives. His remarkable successor, Joseph François Dupleix, son of a director of the French East India Company, saw the chance of building up a European Empire on the ruins of the Mogul.

In faraway Europe war had broken out between England and France. But the death of the Emperor, so important to Frederick, was a pale and distant thing to this man Dupleix surrounded by dusky millions in a continent vast enough to swal-

low up many Silesias and never show a difference. The governor of Pondichèry was wrapped up in great schemes of his own. Dettingen, Fontenoy, King Louis and King George winning or losing battles in Europe, a King of Prussia named Frederick gaining great successes against the Austrians — these were to Dupleix inconsequential beside the really important fact that an English fleet was coming to bombard Pondichèry. He hastened to fortify his town. He wanted to drive the English out of India. With great joy he heard that La Bourdonnais, governor of the Isles of France, was coming to his rescue. The English fleet came, but fearing to give battle to the French ships, sailed away again. Now attack the English possessions in India! But La Bourdonnais, a soldier, looked on the man who had risen to governor from the French East India Company, as a mere trader — he listened superciliously to Dupleix's fine dream of colonization, determined to take no orders from him. Reluctantly, he attacked Madras, but here he stopped. An English fleet under Admiral Boscawen then besieged Pondichèry, and only Dupleix's energy saved it from being taken.

In faraway little Europe, three years after Frederick said "Let us live, and help to live!", the English and the French make peace. Big-wigged diplomats decide at a place called Aix-la-Chapelle that Dupleix must give back Madras to the English, that the two Companies — the French East Indian and the English East Indian — must from now on live in harmony.

But the feeling of rivalry continues.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the English colonists in North America had penetrated inland no farther than the Alleghanies. There were far fewer French on the western continent, but these were spread out over a much vaster territory — they were in the wilderness north of the Great Lakes — they had settlements both at the source of the Mississippi and at

its wide semi-tropical mouth, which in honor of their Bourbon monarch they had named Louisiana.

The English definitely owned only that strip of Atlantic coast between the thirty-first and forty-fourth parallels, with the Hudson's Bay and Straits, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, ceded by France at the Peace of Utrecht. . . . The whole rest of the frontier line in America was very vague. . . . There was constant fighting between the French and English settlers.

The French now laid claim to the entire basins of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi, which would unite their colonies of Canada and Louisiana. The English could stay where they were in the narrow strip between the Alleghanies and the ocean.

In March of the year 1749 the Ohio Company was formed in Virginia to argue out the matter with the French. The King of England, feeling in a generous mood, gave away half a million acres of Indian land in America to the Company. But Louis had already given these to his own settlers. The governor of Canada, La Gallisionière, now sent a party of men to map out and take possession for France of the valleys of the Ohio and the St. Lawrence.

Peace at Aix-la-Chapelle? In the West as in the East a struggle for power continues independently of what may happen in Europe. George and Louis may now be friends but this does not prevent parties of fur-capped men in America from burying plates of lead bearing inscriptions to show that all this land belongs to France, and nailing to a forest tree the Bourbon lilies — which another party of fur-capped men is already marching to tear down.

X

News — real news! The Accessory is going to have a baby. At past forty! Who is the father, wonders Frederick with a

sneer? Not the Marquis or she would surely have had one before this. Certainly not Voltaire!

Frederick's informant sends him the news that a Marquis de Saint-Lambert, twenty years younger than Madame du Châtelet, has got her into this trouble.

So she has been unfaithful not only to her husband but also to Voltaire! — Now he *must* come!

"Madame du Châtelet will be delivered in September. You are not a midwife. She can have her child perfectly well without you, and if necessary you can then be back in Paris," writes Frederick.

But still he will not. From always talking about dying himself he now talks about his mistress dying.

"Not even Frederick the Great, before whom all tremble, can prevent me from carrying out a duty I consider indispensable. I am neither a maker of children — nor a doctor — nor a midwife — but I am a friend, and even for your Majesty's sake I will not leave a woman who may die in September."

Madame du Châtelet is not in good health. This is her first child. At her age who can tell what may happen? But if Voltaire worries, the King of Prussia certainly does not.

"After having given me hopes for the summer, you now put me off to the winter," he complains angrily. "Apparently Apollo, as god of medicine, orders you to preside over the lying-in of Madame du Châtelet. Tell her to hurry up as I am eager to see you," Frederick adds uncouthly.

Marshal Saxe has just been to Sans Souci and Potsdam. Frederick took him to the theatre. It was not pleasant to have the Marshal tell him of new Voltaire plays he had never even heard about.

"I will sacrifice all my complaints to you if you come here. If not beware the epigram. Chance might provide me with a

good one. A poet, however poor a one he may be, is an animal who must be placated."

XI

September — and she is dead!

Frederick had never believed Voltaire's mistress would really die. But she is dead — no doubt about it. Dead — out of the way forever! Predestined to die, and at last let him have Voltaire!

Beware the epigram! But Frederick does not need to write one now, ridiculing Voltaire's love-life. At Sans Souci, however, gazing out at the smooth feminine flanks of the beautiful Greek boy, he does compose a mocking epitaph for the dead woman.

" Here lies one who lost her life through the double accouchement of a ' Treatise on Philosophy ' and of an unfortunate infant. It is not known precisely which of the two took her from us. Upon this lamentable event what opinion ought we to follow? Saint-Lambert assigns it to the book — Voltaire says it was the child."

XII

The woman who kept Voltaire away from Frederick for so many years was tall and mannish in appearance but intensely feminine at heart.

She had married the Marquis du Châtelet when she was sixteen. He did not care for books, and he had his mistresses. When he was not away with his regiment he spent the time hunting and getting into debt. He was always in need of money, and it was convenient to have his wife's friend, Voltaire, the rich author, supply him with this.

It was Voltaire who provided the funds with which to repair the old dilapidated chateau at Cirey where they lived.

She belonged to an age when the great ladies were all studying philosophy and science. Madame du Châtelet had genuine talent for these subjects even though Frederick thought she borrowed all her ideas from Voltaire, Maupertuis and others, as he himself was very prone to do.

Voltaire tried continually to make his mistress and his royal correspondent friends.

" Everything reminds her of you," he would write to Frederick. " Your portrait which is in her room on the right of Louis XIV. Your medals which are between Newton and Marlborough. Your service of plate from which she often eats. And finally your reputation which is present everywhere at all moments."

To his Emilie, until the compliments in them became of a doubtful nature, he proudly exhibited the King's letters.

But they had not been made to like one another. Struggling over Voltaire, their antagonism grew. When Voltaire ceased to show her the King's letters, Madame du Châtelet knew how to find them.

The child (which did not survive infancy) was born — the mother seemed to have undergone the ordeal safely — the Marquis du Châtelet was proudly exhibiting the infant to the neighbors as his — when suddenly, in the presence of husband, Voltaire and new young lover, grouped together under the same roof, Madame du Châtelet had a relapse and in a few hours was dead.

XIII

In the realm of Thought the death of Madame du Châtelet was as important to Frederick as the death of the Emperor had been in the realm of Action.

What, indeed, could keep Voltaire in France now? Frederick wrote urging his claims. " I respected the friendship which

bound you to Madame du Châtelet — but after her I am one of your oldest friends."

Why was the King of Prussia still so anxious to have this old French poet, broken in health, and almost out of his mind with grief? Let him answer this himself.

"I am not so madly presumptuous as to think that Berlin equals Paris. If riches, grandeur and magnificence make an agreeable town, we must yield to Paris. If good taste, which is perhaps more widely dispersed, is to be found in one place in the world, I know and I admit that it is in Paris. But do you not take that taste with you wherever you are?"

That is it! Voltaire always has *good taste,* and Frederick very often has not. He needs the Frenchman to give him the one thing he feels he lacks. He may have his eyes on the future also — desire Voltaire as apologist and propagandist in the event of another war — but " — do you not take that taste with you wherever you go? " strikes the keynote of his motive. Frederick is now passing into middle age, but he still as in his youth defers to French taste. The older he grows the more the attitude grows that everything worth-while in Germany is centered in himself, and everything worth-while in France in Voltaire.

XIV

Voltaire, ill, grief-stricken, and again being persecuted, cannot withstand the persistence of the royal friend who writes —

"You will be received as the Virgil of this age."

Wearily the great Frenchman, whose genius would have got him nowhere had he not also possessed the talents of the courtier, continues to flatter. Like the clown, if he does not amuse, he is not wanted.

"You are the man of all times, of all places, and of all talents, he writes to the King of Prussia. "Receive me into the

ranks of your adorers. I have no merit save that I was the first. The title of Dean of that chapter cannot be refused me. I will take the liberty of saying to your Majesty what La Fontaine at my age said of women, 'I do not give them much pleasure, but they still give me a great deal.'"

When Voltaire arrives in Prussia the King is holding an ancient tournament. A great wooden amphitheatre has been built, in which German officers dressed up as Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans charge at each other in sham combats, beneath the eye of Frederick sitting high up in a box like a Roman emperor.

At the very beginning back of all the liberty that is apparently his, behind all Frederick's assurances, Voltaire sees a question mark. Almost the minute he sets foot in Prussia he regrets having come — begins wondering, when Frederick has sucked the orange dry, what is going to become of the peel?

Frederick gives him a generous pension, a house, free board, carriages to ride in, the Star of his Order of Merit, a Chamberlain's key, for all of which he seems to ask nothing in return, but actually demands everything — the complete submergence of Voltaire's will and personality beneath his own.

Voltaire is both irritable and vain. Craving the power of a monarch's adviser, he soon sees himself a mere entertainer. Perhaps, like the greyhounds, the flute, the pretty pages, his only purpose in Prussia is to help the tired business king to relax?

Voltaire, wanting to be taken into Frederick's political confidence, to become the power behind the throne, finds himself instead used to correct insipid French verses.

"*Plats, plats, plats!*" he writes impatiently on the margin of one of Frederick's creations, an Epistle in the Roman style. "Here are enough *plats* to make a whole supper!"

Voltaire takes a personal hurt now from the very industry

he from a distance once so admired in Frederick, because he rightly sees himself to be only one of many varied interests. In a letter to the Margravine of Bayreuth, through whom it will probably get back to the brother, he allows himself the mockery,

"I am writing all this accompanied by the sound of drums, of trumpets, and of incessant reports of firearms, which deafen my pacific ears. It is good only for Frederick the Great. He requires his armies of a morning, and Apollo in the afternoon. He possesses everything — he forms battalions and composes rhymes."

He is annoyed at being relegated to the department of verse correction, and also — for Voltaire is more patriotic than he would admit — he senses perhaps the coming struggle in which this time France and Prussia will be on opposite sides, and wants to be home when it breaks out. When Voltaire left France Madame de Pompadour had asked him to convey her respects to the King of Prussia. And how had Frederick accepted them? He had drawn himself up haughtily and said —

"I do not know her!"

XV

In Paris, seeing a great deal of Madame de Pompadour this year of Voltaire's arrival in Prussia, when Frederick says "I do not know her!", is a young diplomatist named Wenzel Anton, Count of Kaunitz-Riethberg.

Count Kaunitz is very young to be Austrian ambassador to France. He was young to be appointed Austrian plenipotentiary at the Aix-la-Chapelle peace conference. What is the secret of his success? Mainly that he gets on well with women. Particularly with Maria Theresa because he encourages her in her personal dislike for the King of Prussia.

The French circle at Sans Souci. Voltaire (third from the left) entertains Frederick

In his relations with men Kaunitz is overbearing and supercilious. But with women, he cannot be too nice.

Foppish in manner, inclined like Brühl to exaggerate the importance of clothes, Kaunitz is by no means a fool. He realizes that where hitherto Austria's two great enemies have been Turkey and France, to these must now be added Prussia. The Empress-Queen is right in disliking Frederick, but wrong in thinking of him only as a bad man, a petty elector who so far has been fortunate enough to have good luck. He has become a real menace.

At Paris Kaunitz has a difficult job. He is here to combine France and Austria against Prussia. But they are age-old enemies, and it is difficult to sell the French this idea of a treaty. But he has the two women — in France Madame de Pompadour, in Austria Maria Theresa — with him. If Madame de Pompadour does not have quite enough power now she may some day.

Women are certainly not despised by Kaunitz as by Frederick. It is his way with them that has made him what he is today. It is his way with them that will promote him from Count to Prince Kaunitz.

He sees he can accomplish nothing at the moment, so has himself recalled by Maria Theresa and made Chancellor of State.

Wenzel Anton, Count, later Prince, Kaunitz, who for the next forty years will direct the foreign policy of Austria and who owes his success to the power not of antagonizing but of pleasing women.

XVI

Frederick's reactions, working up to the quarrel, are as easily understood as Voltaire's.

Why will not this Voltaire fit into his particular department

and stay there, thinks the autocratic King, angrily. "The Gentleman-in-Ordinary to Louis XV will give place, if you please, to the great poet," he commands.

He has no use for the courtier, the intriguer, the meddler in politics.

"You went to the Russian ambassador and talked of matters which did not concern you, and it was thought I ordered you to do so. This was assuredly not in your department!" he accuses Voltaire.

Frederick, before Voltaire's arrival, saw him as having a passion for intrigue and cabal, but he believed he could keep him in his place. More and more, when he found it impossible to do this, Frederick ceased to be Philosopher and became King.

"It is a pity that so base a soul should be combined with so admirable a genius," he remarked of Voltaire before he arrived. "I shall however take no notice for I have need of him for my study of the French language. I wish to learn his French. What need I care about his morals?"

But what Frederick could philosophize over at a distance, propinquity makes unbearable.

He does not like the *plat, plat, plats!* and he does not like such other over-enthusiastic comment which Voltaire scribbles on the margin of poems as, "What spirit, what grace, what imagination! How wonderful to live at the feet of such a man!"

They walk among the vines together. How that voice rolls on, and how little it says! is the expression that Frederick sometimes fancies he catches on Voltaire's puckered politely-listening face.

Voltaire does not play the flute himself, and there are times when he does not seem to care to hear others playing it. Also he plainly craves the society of women.

It is bitter too for Frederick to know that while he works

away busily in one room on his *History of My Times,* Voltaire in the next is producing with equal industry not a book about *him,* but an *Age of Louis XIV.*

XVII

The much-advertised suppers at Sans Souci, as Voltaire soon saw, were really Frederick's opportunities for doing an unlimited amount of talking. Here he aired his opinions and his prejudices, and jeered bountifully at his enemies.

Before Voltaire's arrival Frederick had had no real conversational opponent. Despite his insistence that they were all friends together, no one dared argue with him. He could very quickly change and Voltaire saw it. " Beware, gentlemen," now mocks Voltaire noticing Frederick stiffen at some remark, " the King of Prussia has just entered."

Frederick, wanting greatly to be thought a man of culture very different from other Germans, a monarch indeed fit to be King of the French, began to brood on the suspicion that Voltaire thought his encyclopedic knowledge always superficial and often silly.

He wrote in French, but his French was faulty both in grammar and spelling. He spoke a little German but could neither write nor read it well. He did not like Voltaire thinking of him as a somewhat improved Charles XII of Sweden posing as an intellectual.

Above all Frederick was sensitive to ridicule. He was still looking for the man who originated that epigram about Mollwitz, where the King of Prussia had covered himself with glory and flour. This and the fact that Voltaire's mockery was more pointed, and less brutal, than his own, by arousing his professional jealousy, made him almost hate Voltaire at times.

Voltaire was too flippant, far too flippant. And he could not

get away with this flippancy now that he was no longer in France but in Prussia! He had become Frederick's property — indeed in his mocking letters in the Voltairean manner Frederick these days sometimes signed himself — "Frederick, by the Grace of God King of Prussia, Elector of Brandenburg and Possessor of Voltaire."

Frederick liked to play humiliating jokes — he enjoyed seeing borne out his theory of the inherent littleness of human beings. He allowed his palace attendants to neglect Voltaire, so that the latter, for illumination in his own apartment, often had to take away half-burnt candles from the King's rooms when leaving them after a talk. Then he told Voltaire it was unseemly for so great a man to worry about coffee, sugar, candles and other such trifles, and fly in a rage with common servants when he did not get them. One day the King hid a man with an astonishing memory behind a screen, and then requested Voltaire to declaim the beginning of a new play Voltaire had been telling him about. Frederick suddenly interrupted and accused Voltaire of having stolen the play from the hidden man, who, at the King's command, came forward and repeated the lines.

In all this conduct of Frederick's the father who put bear cubs into professor's beds and forced them to write treatises on hobgoblins lived again. But Frederick William had never posed as either a philosopher or a scholar.

XVIII

The Flattener of the Earth, as Voltaire called Maupertuis, was short and heavyset, with a snub red nose and a large red wig. Voltaire looked so like a skeleton, that it seemed a marvel he held together.

The Perpetual President of Frederick's Academy was also a Frenchman, but he had none of his countryman's brilliance.

He was a heavy and tedious talker, but he had both conversational and literary ambitions. "He has just printed a little pamphlet on Happiness," Voltaire writes of him, soon after coming to Prussia. "It is very dry and miserable — it certainly does not give any happiness to those who read it." He also says wittily of Maupertuis. "The wish to please is no part of the President's geometrical studies."

Until Voltaire came, Maupertuis had been the brightest intellectual star shining at Frederick's court. It entertained Frederick to see these two Frenchmen quarreling for influence at the court of a German king — scrambling like dogs for the bones of his favors.

But his amusement changed to anger against Voltaire when certain rumors Maupertuis was circulating came to his ears.

Referring to the King's verses, Voltaire it seemed had said, "Will he never get tired of sending me his dirty linen to wash?" Referring to Frederick's desire to be both a great warrior and a great poet, "This man is a Cæsar and the Abbé Cotin united!"

With Germans Frederick tries his best to appear a Frenchman, now before Voltaire he parades the excellences of a German. After censuring Voltaire severely for getting into a lawsuit with a Jew, he finishes —

"I write this letter with the rough common sense of a German, who speaks what he thinks without employing equivocal terms and loose assuagements which disfigure the truth."

He reminds Voltaire how he gave him a refuge. He forbids him to get into any more lawsuits, or to have any more quarrels.

In these angry notes Frederick speaks of the sacredness of friendship, but what real depth has his own? When his La Mettrie dies now, Frederick sends a letter to Wilhelmine full of effusions of grief at his loss with the lines —

"He is regretted by all who knew him. By avoiding to read his books one could manage to be well content with the man."

"The King of Prussia overloads men of talent with his benefits for precisely the reasons which induce a little German prince to overload with benefits a buffoon or a dwarf," an observer of the Philosopher of Sans Souci writes at this time.

Frederick's irritation grows. It is fed by the fact that he discerns a pettiness in his own actions — are they in the tradition of a really grand monarch? . . . There is Voltaire continually working away on his history of the *Age of Louis XIV*. . . . He has a feeling that if Voltaire ever does write anything about Sans Souci, the Philosopher will appear in a ridiculous rather than a sublime light.

The scandalous stories going the rounds of Europe about the curious male court of the King of Prussia, Frederick does not mind. These attract attention — inspire interest. But to simply be made ridiculous — this he cannot and will not stand!

XIX

While having these troubles at home the Philosopher keeps his eyes on Europe.

What is that movement, just visible, over in Saxony? Yes, the Clothes-horse is conspiring with Russia and Austria to partition Prussia. Frederick instructs his minister at Dresden to try to get him positive proofs of this perfidy of Brühl's.

An important message. Von Mahlzahn has succeeded in bribing a government clerk named Menzel, who will make copies of all despatches that come from Vienna and St. Petersburg with Brühl's answers.

The details of how this wretch Menzel has been got at amuse Frederick. Menzel, it seems, owed a hundred thalers and, being poor like all government clerks, could not pay these. His credi-

tor, a shrewd fellow named Rhenitz, told him he would show him a way to get the money, and accordingly had him introduced to the Prussian minister.

But Menzel needs keys, as the Foreign Office papers are kept securely locked up. You, Privy-Counselor Eichel of Potsdam, send him some. None of the keys sent fit, but Menzel indicates what alterations will have to be made. A new bunch . . . and one of them fits. At Easter time of the year 1753, Frederick is reading his first purloined document.

Menzel's brother-in-law, a journeyman goldsmith, acts as the go-between, carrying the papers to Von Mahlzahn. Some are copies made by Menzel, some originals which he then returns to the files.

Keep Menzel on the payroll, instructs Frederick. Collect evidence to show without a shadow of doubt that there does exist this conspiracy against him.

So they are really plotting against him, these Women and the Clothes-horse! Ah! but he will be ready for them!

XX

A lawsuit with a contemptible Jew, now a real quarrel with Perpetual President Maupertuis!

Unless this is stopped immediately, Paris will certainly be laughing at him, instead of admiring.

Maupertuis had unfairly dismissed from the Academy a scientist named Koenig, charging him with having purloined some scientific ideas. Voltaire seized the occasion to vent his dislike for the Earth-Flattener by writing a pamphlet giving proofs of Koenig's honesty and ridiculing Maupertuis.

The King of Prussia now made the mistake of crossing pens publicly with Voltaire as a satirist — and what a mistake!

Frederick had the royal press issue a pamphlet in which he

anonymously tried to make *Voltaire* ridiculous. Voltaire thereupon issued a second pamphlet ridiculing the unknown writer whom everyone knew to be the King. Outmocked by Voltaire in every line, and realizing it, Frederick suddenly became the furious despot.

The Flattener of the Earth and the Philosopher of Sans Souci exhibited side by side in the same side-show by this insuppressible mocker! Frederick seized all copies of the *Diatribe of Doctor Akakia,* Voltaire's next master-satire against Maupertuis, which he had been forbidden to print, and had them publicly burned by the executioner. "I should not be surprised," said Voltaire, with a sly smile, as he watched the bonfire from his window, "if that were my Doctor they are burning." But he had had an edition printed in Holland as well as in Berlin, and another in Paris, where everybody was buying it.

To be thus outwitted made Frederick furious. He placed Voltaire under arrest. He had all his letters opened to see what he was writing to Paris. When he took the grenadiers away from before Voltaire's door, he still refused to see him. "You can quit my service when you like," he wrote in an angry note, realizing that when Voltaire asked permission to go to Plombières for his health this was only an excuse for leaving Prussia. "But before you go, be so good as to return me the key, the cross, and a volume of verses I confided to you."

Be so good as to — A false humility in conversation was one of the characteristics which all now noticed in Frederick. The autocratic King of Prussia continually used such expressions as "May I venture to ask — If you will permit me to have the honor of remarking — Be so good as to — "

He told Voltaire he could go, but he did not mean it. When, after an apparent reconciliation between King and poet, Voltaire did leave, Frederick had him arrested at Frankfort, and his baggage searched before he was finally allowed to proceed

on his way. He also used his influence at the French court, where Louis XV had always disliked Voltaire, to have the old man kept out of France, so that Voltaire, homeless, was forced to seek a refuge in Switzerland.

XXI

How keenly did Frederick feel the loss of this man he had been begging to come to Prussia for nearly twenty years and who had stayed with him scarcely as many months?

Except as a possession, not very keenly. The whole trouble in this friendship of prince and poet lay in the fact that while to Voltaire, living in a time when powerful patrons were so necessary, it meant a tremendous lot; to the King, this other man controlling the destinies of millions, it was a mere episode in a very active career.

Grown accustomed to deal with physically real objects and problems — the disposition of soldiers in battle, attracting immigrants to the sparsely populated sections of Prussia, digging canals to facilitate the transportation of material goods, the creation of a merchant marine — Frederick had come at heart to despise everything that remained in the realm of Idea. And this sense of values seemed to him justified by Voltaire's persistent efforts to break into the realm of Action.

Also from the amphitheatrical box of his royal birth Frederick looked down on Voltaire. He took the view that great kings like himself were the supermen of history. Humanity was for him divided into the extraordinary few to which he belonged, and the herd. Now and again a pair of horns might push up above the herd and show the amusing face of a Voltaire, but if momentarily conspicuous, its proper place, nevertheless, remained down there in the dust and the dirt and the lowing, among the swirl of ordinary human emotions. The

elect few, on the contrary, Frederick saw as essentially tragic figures. The sufferings of the herd were mean and petty, his own formed a fit subject for epics. As he grew older this contempt for mankind in general grew along with the self-pity.

This is why he is so little touched by the miseries of war. He looks upon the dead and dying littering a battlefield as creatures of ignoble ambitions who must perish anyway. " Come on, you blackguards! " he shouts at Hohenfriedberg. " Do you want to live forever? "

He will maintain his power, or it may go to ruin and the Prussian name be buried under it — his ambition has whispered to him that he has done more than another in building up his House, and has played a distinguished part among the crowned heads of Europe — these are all the assertions of a practical-minded megalomaniac who if he looks at humanity through the wrong end of a telescope never forgets to turn the telescope round the right way when he takes a peep at himself.

Voltaire saw Frederick's life as one-sided because of the absence of women. In the plays put on by Frederick no women performed, their parts being taken by female impersonators, like Prince Henry. Voltaire wrote of these theatricals to Wilhelmine —

" Madame, when we act at Potsdam without women, I assure you that it is much against our will. The monks pray to God to send them women, take my advice and do not try to do without men at Bayreuth. The stage is the representation of human life — and in this life it is necessary that men and women should be together, as otherwise it would only be half an existence."

Frederick for his part saw Voltaire as living only half an existence, because circumstances prevented him from ever being a Man of Action.

But the material world passes away. . . . Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. . . . Even kings die, he himself will some day be only a name. And is not a name itself only a word? What a baffling paradox that words, and these alone, will make him real to future generations! And what a conjurer with words this Voltaire is!

XXII

It was on the Potsdam parade-ground, a mile away from Sans Souci, that Frederick and Voltaire parted, never to see each other again.

Before Voltaire came, Frederick had seen war approaching. "I have leisure this year, and God knows if I shall ever have it again," he wrote.

Now, with the Man of Thought gone, he plunged into Action. The first of the great Prussian autumn manoeuvres, destined to become such a striking feature of German military life, was held by Frederick shortly after Voltaire's departure.

Forty thousand troops were concentrated at Spandau. The manoeuvres lasted twelve days. From all parts of the kingdom Prussian officers came to attend them. A close cordon of sentries was drawn around the plain, and an inquisitive clergyman who tried to climb the Spandau church tower to watch the spectacle was quickly pulled down by the Prussian guard.

Frederick had two improvements to his father's army he wanted to try out. The first was a new way of moving the foot-soldiers, the *Schräge Ordnung,* a method of shifting large bodies of troops diagonally across the front of the enemy to concentrate an attack at a given point, without exposing a flank. This movement was not original with Frederick. The Macedonians had used it successfully — Frederick, always looking through Cæsar's *Commentaries,* and other ancient books about warfare, had read about it, and realized its possibilities. It

needed, for success in execution, just that perfect discipline which the Prussian infantry had. The little detached groups obliquing across the face of the enemy had an appearance of a disorganized mob which would mislead the opposing general — but a single order changed their direction and hurled them against the enemy in one massive unit. Frederick was the first to revive this foot-movement, and the only general of his times to use it successfully.

The second was manoeuvring cavalry in great compact masses. Frederick William had neglected this branch of the army. Frederick did not want to have it thought that the training his father had given the infantry was responsible for his victories. The father had favored the infantry, the son favored the cavalry. Besides, the glamour of a great cavalry charge appealed to him.

Frederick William had been interested in big men with big substantial feet, Frederick was interested in any man who could carry a gun and ride a horse. He went from the field manoeuvres to an inspection of the Silesian fortresses. He looked over the muster of his army, now well over a hundred thousand strong. " Nothing is more certain than that the number of subjects constitutes the wealth of a state," he says, casting envious glances across the Rhine to France and south of the Giant Mountains to where Maria Theresa is busy reforming the Austrian army. Infanticide is one of the few crimes rigorously punished with death in Prussia.

War is coming, no doubt about that. In the East and in the West the English and French are resuming their struggle for colonial supremacy. All these preparations in France, Austria and Russia mean something. By saying to Voltaire " I do not know her! ", calling her Petticoat Three, and conjecturing whether Louis' bad health may not be due to the fact that Madame de Pompadour has given him syphilis, he has perhaps

created a party hostile to himself in France. By calling the Czarina Elizabeth, who likes her lovers, a female Louis XV and also *le Catin du Nord,* he has doubtless antagonized Russia, while the pious Hapsburg stick who rules Austria and the Saxon clothes-horse have never liked him anyway.

"The war between France and England," reflects Frederick, "will be for economic reasons. But the Three Whores and the Clothes-Horse plan my destruction simply because they hate me."

XXIII

Not long after Voltaire left Prussia there appeared a little book containing details of a subject which for years had excited the curiosity of Europe — the mysterious sex-life of the King of Prussia. It was written in French, and appeared anonymously, but because of the quarrel was generally supposed to be an act of vengeance on the part of Voltaire.

The writer of *La Vie Privée du Roi de Prusse* laid claim to inside information which proved to a certainty that the Philosopher of Sans Souci, like some more ancient philosophers, indulged freely in the "Greek" vice. He described, for instance, how Frederick would every day throw his handkerchief to the handsome pages — whichever caught it then had the honor of retiring with him into a private chamber. But in what followed, added the writer, the King of Prussia, owing to a physical incapacity, was never able to take the positive part, but must be content with playing the female or passive rôle.

A work the authorship of which Voltaire always denied, though he did frequently say that he had never known a man more lascivious by nature than the King of Prussia.

Frederick enjoyed making jokes, and writing verses about soldiers' backsides. He, long before he reached the age of forty, took no interest in women — only giving those a glance who

had legs like a man. He paid out a great deal of money for castrated Italian boys who sang soprano at the concerts where the King played the flute. But all this proves nothing. Because Frederick liked to talk about sodomy, it does not necessarily follow that he practised it.

More important, perhaps, in this regard are his admirations. Alexander and Cæsar, who lived in days when pretty boys were more sought after by the voluptuaries than girls — Condé and Marshal Villars, who during their campaigns grew quite accustomed to intercourse with their own sex — Turenne and Prince Eugene, who as young men used often to sell themselves to their comrades to get money for the next meal — all leaned quite frankly to this indulgence.

Those who alone could speak with authority on the subject are long since dead — vanished into that oblivion where the shade of moral difference between the frankly male fornications of Louis XV and the secret "Greek" vice of Frederick might be difficult to detect in the general darkness.

XXIV

In the North American wilderness a small party of English-speaking men are busy cutting down trees to build a log fort. The forest rings with the strokes of their axes. They are men in the employ of the Ohio Company, and the spot chosen for the fort is where the Alleghany and Monongahela rivers meet to form the Ohio.

Through the forest to occupy this fort marches a detachment of a hundred and fifty Virginian soldiers, having as their leader a young man named George Washington. Before they reach the point where the three shining streams of water come together, they meet the thirty-three men in the building party coming towards them.

The French have driven them off. The English fort becomes Fort Duquesne, after the French Governor of Canada. On July 3rd, 1754, the French attack and defeat Washington at Great Meadows.

Now Braddock, harsh, ignorant and intolerant of advice, is sent to America from England with two regiments. He treats the friendly Indians so contemptuously that most of them go over to the French. Ten miles from Fort Duquesne, a year after Washington's defeat, Braddock blunders into an ambuscade, his little European army is cut to pieces, and he himself is killed.

England has for prime minister the incompetent old Duke of Newcastle. Always in a hurry, never getting anything done, the Duke shows his competence to handle the situation in America by stuttering — "Annapolis! yes, Annapolis must be defended! to be sure Annapolis should be defended! — pray where is Annapolis?"

The shadow of Braddock's disaster lying dark over the English settlers. . . . More Indians going over to the French. . . .

In the western world the war known in American history as the French and Indian War has begun

XXV

The same summer that Braddock was being massacred in America, a middle-aged man wearing a large black wig, and having among his baggage a flute-case, took the river boat from Amsterdam to Utrecht.

On board the same boat there happened to be travelling a young Swiss schoolmaster named Henri de Catt. He was on his vacation and travelling inexpensively, as teachers still have to do. But though poor he was proud, and therefore he was shocked when a man whom he had noticed staring at him for

some time from the cabin doorway stepped forward and asked him abruptly in an arrogant tone — "Who are you, sir?"

The schoolmaster looked this man over, and was not impressed. The stranger wore a cinnamon-colored coat with gold buttons — it was very dirty with snuff. His hands and face were also dirty with snuff, and his breeches showed where after wiping his nose he next wiped his hands on these. Catt disdained to make any answer.

The stranger now became more polite. He invited Catt to come up out of the smoke of the steerage — he seemed to have a strong prejudice against tobacco smoke, as though someone in his family might over-indulge or have over-indulged in pipe-smoking — and share the cabin with him. Catt accepted.

The man had a low receding forehead, and very intent blue eyes. Catt soon saw that he was fond of talking, also that he had a weakness for making sweeping statements, as though like God he could read at a distance what was written in men's hearts. For instance, he said suddenly, as they watched the passing shore together —

"Do you see the man in the garden yonder, sitting smoking his pipe? That man, you may depend on it, is not happy."

How did he know? Catt was not impressed.

Did Catt play the flute, asked the stranger all at once with equal abruptness, fixing him with sharp attentive eyes. Catt did not. That was a pity, commented the stranger, for he himself did — he was a musician to the King of Poland — and they might have played a duet together.

He began to discuss religion. When Catt called his attention to the fact that he was reasoning in a circle, and asked him how he was going to get out of this, he replied lightly, "I shall skip over it."

Again for a while they watched in silence the flat Dutch shore and its windmills, this melancholy panorama of water and

sky, drift by. Suddenly, again so abruptly as to startle Catt, the musician to the King of Poland asked —

"What form of government do you think the best?"

Catt thought a moment. Then he said — the monarchic. "That is, if the king is just and enlightened."

"Ah," said the stranger softly, putting the tips of his fingers together in a curiously virtuous gesture, "but where will you find kings of that sort?"

Catt made some vague answer. He did not think it good policy to discuss kings in public. You could never tell who was listening.

But the stranger now launched forth into a dreadful tirade against kings. They were — all of them! — scoundrels and tyrants. His indignation frightened the school-teacher. At the same time there was much that he said with which Catt quite agreed.

"I have not the honor to be acquainted with kings," said Catt, after a cautious look around, "but to judge from what one has read in history about them, I should believe, sir, that on the whole you are right."

"I *am* right!" exclaimed the stranger with great emphasis. "Not on the whole, but in every detail. Yes, yes, I am right. *I* know the gentlemen."

What had kings ever done to him, wondered Catt. Then he remembered the King of Poland's reputation for debauchery. This explained it! A wife or a daughter of the poor musician had been snatched away and ravished. But he was no longer poor — see, he travelled in the cabin, and musicians were not usually richer than school-teachers. Then the King of Poland had given him money — but he was still bitter.

Kings were as much to be pitied as censured, resumed the stranger, taking a calmer tone. Their lot was a miserable one. Their destiny prevented them from ever having friends. Here,

to Catt's surprise, the stranger launched into some French verses on the subject, which he recited with as much feeling as though he had written them himself.

Suddenly, again in his abrupt manner, he asked Catt if he had ever been in Germany. Catt had not. But he would like to go there, he said, not so much to make the round of all the diminutive courts, as to visit Prussia whose ruler was everywhere so much talked about, a monarch of ability evidently but unscrupulous as . . .

"Nothing more of kings, sir," interrupted the stranger, sharply. "What have we to do with them? We will spend the rest of the voyage on more agreeable and cheering subjects."

He took some Spanish snuff, wiped his hands on his breeches, and sat glowering at the water. From remarks he now made about the inherent badness of human nature, Catt got the impression he very much despised mankind. On parting, the disillusioned musician to the King of Poland asked Catt's name and address, saying, "Perhaps we shall see each other again."

A few weeks later, Frederick, who had been touring Holland incognito, invited Catt to come to Prussia, where he made him his reader, in which capacity Catt served him until his death, one of the men with whom Frederick was most confidential.

XXVI

Nearer comes the storm. Frederick's brief outing in Holland made him the more aware of its approach when he returned to take up his duties as King. Along a great arc almost girdling Prussia the clouds were gathering — an arc formed by the frontiers of France, Saxony, Austria and Russia.

"But Russia has no money," thinks Frederick. "The fat Czarina has squandered it all on her lovers, and is today dependent on English subsidies. . . . Conditions in France have

certainly been growing steadily worse under the Well-Beloved. . . . In Austria I am hated by the Empress-Queen, but then there must be a party strongly opposed to an alliance with France. . . . Saxon Clothes-Horses I have beaten before and can always beat again. . . . In the last analysis then these great armaments arrayed against me may be simply a paper combination — if by a bold move at the beginning I win a great victory they may very quickly arrange themselves differently."

On all sides Frederick, on the eve of the Seven Years War, has enemies, but in Russia he has one strange friend. This is an erratic young man in the twenties, who at one moment thinks only of heavy drinking and mistresses, and the next with wild enthusiasm plans to Prussianize Russia.

Of all Frederick's youthful admirers the Grand Duke Peter, heir to the throne of Russia, was the most ardent and least level-headed. He was the son of the Czarina's sister, and worshipped the King of Prussia as much as his aunt hated him. Frederick, until he saw a chance to make use of him, did not think much of Peter. Some time since, when a marriage between his sister and Peter was suggested, Frederick had rejected this with scorn — a sister of his marry a Russian barbarian! — he had chosen for Peter the least important German princess he could find, a young woman named Catherine.

But Peter idolized Frederick. Something about Frederick's wilfulness, and disdain for all authority other than his own, caught the young Grand Duke's fancy. He longed for the time when he would be Czar that he might imitate him in everything. Then he would get rid of the priests, or at least shave off their beards, put Prussian uniforms on his soldiers, be like Frederick, iconoclast, philosopher, conquering Cæsar all in one. But where Frederick had his feet firmly on the ground, Peter was tainted with a streak of insanity — he sometimes drilled cats.

XXVII

Nearer!

Austrians concentrating in Moravia and Bohemia. Russians concentrating in Livonia. Frederick's admirer, the Grand Duke Peter, warns him that a partition of Prussia has been definitely agreed upon by these two powers. Silesia and Glatz are to revert to Austria, East Prussia will go to Russia, which intends to exchange it for Polish territory on the Russian border.

The attack is to be made in August. Saxony and Sweden will come in later against Prussia, and for their help are to receive Magdeburg and Prussian Pomerania.

And France? France has not quite decided yet which way to jump. France has a treaty of alliance with Prussia which is about to expire — will it be renewed?

It is Frederick himself who decides this. Wishing to be sure of at least one ally he makes a defensive treaty with England. Now French sentiment is wholly against him.

Accusations and counter-accusations. England accuses Austria of breaking a law of nature in making an alliance with France. Maria Theresa angrily replies, "It is not I who have abandoned the old system, but your court which has at once abandoned the system and me, in concluding a treaty with the bad King of Prussia. The news of that treaty came upon me like a stroke of apoplexy."

France accuses Prussia. Among the Prussians who think the English treaty unwise is Frederick's own brother, August William, the heir to the throne. "I would give a finger from my hand had this treaty with England never been concluded," he exclaims to Valori. But Frederick says he could not wait any longer for France to make up her mind.

The Menzel documents have acquainted Frederick with both

the Treaty of Warsaw and the Treaty of St. Petersburg, so that he knows of the plan to partition Prussia, and reduce him to the rank of a Margrave. A secretary in the Austrian embassy at Berlin named Maximilian Weingarten has also been bribed. Weingarten falls under suspicion. He disappears. When the Austrian government asks that he be given up as a traitor, Frederick says surely, if Weingarten can be found, which he cannot.

An anonymous letter from Russia — which he knows comes from the Grand Duke — telling him that Austria and Russia have postponed the attack planned for this autumn until next spring.

XXVIII

England's continental diplomacy at this period was indeed an astonishing phenomenon. Its devious and intricate windings were all for the purpose of making certain that when war with France broke out, there would be somewhere in Europe an army willing to defend Hanover.

Sir William Hanbury was working hard to get Russia. Finally, on the thirtieth of September, 1755, he put through his Subsidy Treaty. Russia was to immediately supply fifty-five thousand men, fifteen thousand of them cavalry, in return for which England was to pay half a million dollars annually as long as peace lasted, and five times this amount when the Russians were called upon to fight.

This was looked upon as a great diplomatic triumph, until England discovered that these Russian troops were being assembled on the Lithuanian frontier across from Prussia, that Elizabeth, in fact, had no intention of letting them fight anyone except Frederick.

Meanwhile Frederick had made his offer to England to keep any war that might arise in Europe out of Hanover with his

army, and Pitt had gladly accepted it. The Neutrality Convention of Prussia with England, done at Westminster in January of the new year, was followed by a refusal to ratify Hanbury's Subsidy Treaty. England instead offered the Czarina the same terms if she would promise simply to keep her army from attacking the King of Prussia. This Elizabeth refused.

A maze of diplomatic intrigue, official stupidity and bickerings. . . . Every country about to enter the war had alliances with two others mutually hostile. Prussia was allied with England, but had not yet broken off her alliance with France. Austria was in league with France, but had not yet separated from England. Russia, too, though urging on Austria to an immediate declaration against Prussia, England's ally, still had a treaty of alliance with the island.

And who is responsible for this complex situation, this violation of laws of nature, these new combinations that have formed? Frederick alone. In the natural course of events France, making war on England, would seek an alliance with Prussia, so that the Prussian army could help against Hanover. In the natural course of events Austria, France's great continental enemy, would, as of old, be England's ally on the continent. But three women are determined to crush Prussia in order to bury the hateful King beneath its ruins — and so is the angry Clothes-Horse Brühl.

XXIX

Move first!

Frederick calls a meeting of his generals. He realizes that when he takes the aggressive in this war, he must overcome the same prejudices which existed when he invaded Silesia. He produces the copies made by Menzel of the documents showing Saxony to be so much in league with Russia and Austria that

one of the blows struck at Brandenburg is to be made through this kingdom.

He outlines his own plan. It is to take the allies by surprise by marching into Saxony this autumn — never will he wait for them to attack him in the spring! Saxony will then become his base for operations against Austria. Only twenty thousand troops are in Saxony, and these are not ready. His own army of a hundred and fifty thousand men can march at a moment's notice.

A quick and terrible thrust which will win the war for him before the Allies know it has started. . . . He forbids luxury among the officers. . . . Only one baggage cart is to go with a company. . . . No silver plate may be taken along, tin plates and cups will do just as well for the officers as for the privates.

Meanwhile he writes to Austria demanding an explanation of the troop concentration opposite Silesia. On the twenty-fifth of August, Frederick tells his brother, the Prince of Prussia, " I have as yet received no answer from Vienna. I count myself surer of war than ever, as the Austrians have named their generals, and their army is ordered to march to Koniggratz. If I do get an answer it will either be a haughty one or so vague that it will mean nothing. I have therefore arranged everything for setting out on Saturday next."

The answer he receives is just as indefinite and equivocal as he had expected. Then it is war.

And why not? . . . After ten years of peace an army in splendid shape. . . . A new crowd of ambitious young officers eager for promotion. . . . He himself only forty-four!

XXX

The Prussian army enters Saxony at three points. Frederick in command of the main body crosses the Elbe at Torgau

and seizes Leipzig. Duke Ferdinand of Hanover marches with an army eighty miles to his right, the Duke of Brunswick-Bevern eighty to his left. The three armies, converging, are to meet at Dresden, the capital, a hundred and fifty miles away.

Part Six

THREE WHORES AND A CLOTHES-HORSE

I

"WHAT say you to this league against the Margrave of Brandenburg? How great would be the astonishment of the Great Elector if he could see his great-grandson at war at the same time with the Russians, the Austrians, almost all Germany and one hundred thousand French auxiliaries! I do not know whether it will be disgraceful in me to be overcome, but I am sure there will be no great glory in vanquishing me."

Through all the vicissitudes of the Seven Years War how well these words express Frederick's attitude. . . . He sees the past watching him as well as the future. . . . The suffering the war may entail for people of more obscure destinies is lost sight of in the brilliant vision of himself at a heroic labor which, whether he succeeds or fails, can only bring him Glory.

Though he pretends that the desire for Glory was a thing of his youth only, Frederick actually wants it more than ever as a man in the forties. Doubtless he remembers that Cæsar's military career did not begin until he was middle-aged, that when the Roman set forth on his Gallic wars he too was forty-four. His experience with Voltaire has shown the King that in a battle of wits he is not always the victor. But war enables him to become an absolute autocrat. Military discipline and wartime psychology make men bow absolutely to his will.

Only in war can his will express itself fully, hurling, as it does, men to death against their very instincts to live. Frederick always feels that his genius is responsible when he wins a battle, and that a relentless fate works against him when he loses. Winning, he has triumphed despite the gods, losing, he has been predestined.

The letter in which he sees himself objectively fighting the world under the eyes of his ancestors, was written to a friend, Lord Marischal, on June the eighteenth, 1757, a year after the three armies left Prussia to converge on Dresden.

II

He had gained one victory, but he had just suffered a far more crushing defeat.

When he marched into Saxony, Frederick had hoped to defeat the small Saxon army, capture Dresden, proceed into Bohemia, defeat the Austrian army, and threaten, if not actually take, Vienna. The whole success of his plan depended, as did that of the 1914 German march on Paris, upon quickness of movement.

The Saxons, by retreating into an almost impregnable camp on the banks of the Elbe, defeated this plan. By the time that Frederick had forced surrender by a blockade, winter was too near for him to risk a campaign in Bohemia. The Saxons in 1756 were the Belgians of 1914.

Frederick took Dresden, but now the Allies had a whole winter to get ready. His violation of Saxon neutrality was used as propaganda to raise the German princes against him, so that an imperial army was added to those of Austria, Russia, France, Sweden and Saxony lined up against him. The population of the allied countries aggregated a hundred millions. Their armies for the spring invasion of Prussia were calculated to

reach half a million men. Prussia's population at the beginning of the Seven Years War was five millions. She had an army of less than two hundred thousand, a quarter of which was necessary to garrison fortresses.

Huge odds numerically, but from his central position, Frederick, like the Kaiser in the World War, could strike in all directions. He never, however, forgave the Saxons for spoiling his plans. Almost his first act when he occupied Dresden was to take from the archives the originals of the letters proving the hypocrisy of Saxony's cry of outraged neutrality. Throughout the war he treated the country as a Roman proconsul would a conquered province, levying enormous taxes, and forcing every able-bodied man into his army.

When spring came he resorted to an old trick — the feigning of fear, so that the enemy would not suspect he intended to continue on the offensive. From defenses he was constructing in Saxony he made it appear that his one thought was of preparation to repel an allied invasion. But the snow had scarcely melted when the Prussians poured into Bohemia through the passes of the Giant and Metal Mountains.

Again the plan was that of convergence, this time on Prague. Two armies came from Saxony, one led by Frederick, the other by the Duke of Brunswick-Bevern, a third was due from Silesia under seventy-two-year-old Marshal Schwerin, who, like the cavalry commander Ziethen, badly treated by Frederick during the peace years, had been induced by an appeal to his patriotism to came back into active service upon the outbreak of war.

The fact that the King in person commanded one of these converging units made it possible for him to use this method successfully where disagreements among Allied generals so frequently caused it to fail. But it was his very omnipotence which now so nearly lost him the first big battle of the war. The Austrian army had taken up a strong position outside Prague.

Schwerin, who had the longest distance to go, arrived at the meeting place late. He did not appear until the morning of the sixth, the day appointed for the attack. His troops had made forced marches for three days. They had been on their feet all through the night. The old Marshal begged for a day's rest. But Frederick had said the attack should be on the sixth, and he refused to postpone it.

For three hours the dead-tired Prussian infantry tried to cross a marsh and take the steep hill on which the Austrians had their batteries. After repeated charges had failed, the old Marshal seeing his men being rapidly exterminated by the terrible artillery fire — driven desperate by this defeat which, at the close of his life, was going to stain his reputation — snatched the colors from a wounded ensign, and crying, "Follow me, my children!" tottered forward, and was instantly killed. The hill was finally taken, but at terrific loss. For the heavy Prussian casualities Frederick alone was responsible. He had been in too much of a hurry to have the ground reconnoitred properly. He had thought the marsh was a firm green meadow. He had attacked against the dead Marshal's advice with tired troops. The Austrians were beaten, but their army was able to get away, a part of it into Prague, and the rest to join another approaching Austrian army, as it would not have been able to do had the defeat been more decisive.

This was the dubious victory of Prague.

III

Next, Frederick had expected Prague to fall quickly. Then he planned to send part of his army back to join the Hanoverians against the French, while with the remainder he advanced down the Prague-Vienna highway, finishing the war within the year.

Frederick

But Prague held out week after week. Cautious Daun, in command of the Austrian army outside the city, kept backing away from Frederick, refusing to give him battle. The King of Prussia, with an army only half the size, advanced recklessly along the highroad until at last he came upon the Austrians camped among the low hills to the west of the road.

He knew that he was badly outnumbered, but this did not prevent him from attacking. Frederick's theory of victory, which Napoleon took from him, was indifferent to how great might be the odds against him — it was concerned only with *outnumbering the enemy at a given point.* His oblique march was for this purpose.

He hurled his army diagonally against the Austrian right wing. First he seemed victorious. He saw Ziethen's cavalry pushing the Austrians back. But what was Prince Maritz doing? Why did he not come up with reinforcements? Old Leopold's son, in command of the Prussian left wing had through a mistake attacked at the wrong point. Still the damage could be repaired. Frederick was about to give an order when he saw the right wing, told to stay on the highroad as a reserve, move forward. Without orders General Mannstein, thinking to stem the turning tide, had impetuously attacked. Frederick saw his whole strategy of localizing the battle at one point ruined, as he watched the two armies fighting along the entire front.

In vain he tried to rally the Prussian fugitives. In vain he stared with blazing eyes at the enemy artillery, whose cannonballs and case-shots were falling all around him.

"Does your Majesty mean to take the battery alone?" asked an adjutant, touching the King's arm, as he alone would not fall back.

He looked at it a moment longer through his field glass, and then at last gave orders for the retreat. Half of his army had

been destroyed. His splendid regiment of Guards had been almost annihilated.

This was the terrible defeat of Kollin, after which Frederick wrote to Lord Marischall, " What say you to this league against the Margrave of Brandenburg? "

But the Prussians strewing the battlefield are not the only men in the world. While furious at the defeat Frederick shows little feeling for the dead.

" Twenty-three battalions," he says simply, and it is true, " were not sufficient to drive sixty thousand men from their entrenchments. Another time we will take better precautions. Fortune has this day turned her back upon me. I ought to have expected it — she is a female, and I am not gallant."

IV

Kollin, for the Prussians, was followed by terrible weeks. By the time Frederick had retreated from Bohemia back into Saxony, he had lost forty thousand men. His own blunders he took lightly. " You should know," he said to an officer, riding beside him, " that in this world every man must have his reverses. It appears that I am now to have mine." But he never forgave the Prince of Prussia for incompetence on the retreat.

Frederick's eldest brother had been against the war from the beginning. He was opposed to making that treaty with England which must inevitably mean a break with France. He saw how meaningless was the King's gesture of keeping his private and public life separate when he was so willing to imperil his country's safety by making insulting personal remarks about other crowned heads. August William had tried to counteract the harm to Prussia Frederick was doing in France, by always speaking very politely of Madame de Pompadour to the French minister, Valori.

On the retreat he had command of an army corps. Why was it a crime for him not to have prevented the Austrians, outnumbering him more than two to one, from capturing the fortress of Zittau? Certainly it was Frederick, who at the beginning of the campaign, had made the biggest mistake.

But the King, when they met, would not speak to him. Surrounded by his staff, Frederick approached the spot where the Prince of Prussia was waiting on horseback surrounded by his. The two brothers seemed about to meet and greet each other when Frederick swung his group around so that the tails of all the horses were towards August William. Then, dismounting, he threw himself petulantly on the ground with his back to his brother. General Goltz rode over to the Prince and delivered to him verbally the following message —

" His Majesty commands me to inform your Royal Highness that he has cause to be greatly discontented with you, and that you deserve to have a court-martial held over you, which would sentence you and all your generals to death, but that his Majesty will not carry the matter so far, being unable to forget that in the chief general he has a brother."

Indeed! August William replied coldly that he desired a court-martial. But Frederick, knowing there was nothing to convict his brother on, refused to grant this request. He forbade any intercourse between his own army and his brother's, which had disgraced itself. When the Prince sent a messenger for the countersign Frederick said that " he had no countersign to give to cowards." When August William himself brought over his official report and list of troops Frederick took the papers from his brother silently and turned his back on him.

The disgraced brother, in bad health, asked permission to leave active service to go recruiting. Frederick wrote back —

" Your bad conduct has greatly injured my affairs. It is not the enemy, but your ill-concerted measures, which have done

me this harm. My generals also are inexcusable, whether they gave you bad advice or only allowed you to come to such injudicious resolutions. In this sad situation it only remains for me to make a last attempt. I must hazard a battle. If we cannot conquer, we must all of us have ourselves killed.

"I do not complain of your heart, but of your incapacity, and of the little judgment you have shown in making your decisions. A man who has but a few days to live need not dissemble. I wish you better fortune than mine has been, and that all the miseries and bad adventures you have had may teach you to treat important matters with greater care, sense and resolution than you have hitherto done. The greatest part of the calamities which I now apprehend comes only from you. You and your children will suffer more from them than I shall. Be persuaded, nevertheless, that I have always loved you, and that with these sentiments I shall die."

In this letter August William saw the familiar tendency never to forget the mistakes of others while ready to make so light of his own, the attitude that *he* must recover what others have lost, the reiteration of the harshness of his lot as a man of destiny, the talk of dying. The brother had spirit of his own. He did not answer the letter, but now through one of his officers asked permission to throw up his commission and retire to his family in Berlin.

"Let him go, he is fit for nothing else," was Frederick's answer.

Within a year the Prince of Prussia was dead.

"What did he die of?" asked Frederick, when the news was brought him in camp.

"Of despair, your Majesty."

Frederick turned on his heel without making any comment.

V

What are the English doing? Nothing — or very little.

An army of a hundred thousand Frenchmen which crossed the Rhine under the command of Voltaire's friend, Richelieu, drives the incompetent young Duke of Cumberland before it, and pillages Hanover. The imperial army, which would never have formed but for Kollin, joins the French at Erfurt. East Prussia is now over-run by Russians. Sweden, hearing of the allied victory, begins to ship troops to Stralsund for an invasion of Prussian Pomerania.

" Happy the moment when I took to training myself in philosophy," exclaims Frederick. " There is nothing else which can sustain a soul in a situation like mine."

He has never cared for his mother, but he sees that her death shortly after Kollin makes him the more tragic a figure. " This loss puts the crown on my sorrows," he says.

The King, who inflicts dreadful punishments on his soldiers when they attempt suicide, who, no Christian himself, exploits their belief that self-destruction means going to hell, carries with him always a phial of poison. What is cowardice in the common soldier becomes nobility in the King. Frederick has often mentioned suicide but it is after Kollin that he first talks about it a lot in his letters.

He composes with great care at Erfurt an *Epistle To My Sister* in which he declares to Wilhelmine in French tragic verse that he will never survive the downfall of Prussia. Like Cato the Roman, he means to die by his own hand.

" If these things regarded myself alone, I could stand it with composure. But I am the bound guardian of the happiness of a people which has been put under my charge. There lies the sting of it! "

But in the same breath, Frederick speaks of the war as a

personal quarrel. " There is no example," he says, " of such a conspiracy as that infamous triumvirate, Austria, France and Russia now forms against me. Was it ever before seen that three great princes laid plot in concert to destroy a fourth who had done nothing to them? "

The Erfurt Epistle abounds in grand and tragic figures of speech.

" Thus Destiny with a deluge of torments fills the poisoned remnants of my days. . . . The present is hideous to me, the future unknown. . . . Do you say that I am the creature of a beneficent being? I see that all men are the sport of Destiny. . . . And if there do exist some gloomy and inexorable being who allows a despised herd of creatures to go on multiplying here he values them as nothing. He looks down on our virtues, our misdeeds, on the horrors of war and on all the cruel plagues which ravage the earth as a thing indifferent to him. Wherefore my sole refuge and only haven, loved sister, is in the arms of death."

Wilhelmine replies in the same high-tragedy tone. But she reminds her brother —

" Cæsar was the slave of pirates, and yet he became master of the world. A great genius like yours finds resources even when all is lost."

Frederick refuses to be consoled. Not content with dying himself, he asks Wilhelmine to commit suicide also.

VI

Voltaire is far less impressed. Since the quarrel in Prussia there had been no correspondence between King and poet, but now, at the sister's request, the old Frenchman writes to Frederick to dissuade him from his dreadful resolve. Knowing Frederick as well as he does he is sure the threat would never

come to anything anyway, but it is an opportunity to puncture some of the Philosopher-King's grand pretensions.

"You wish to die," writes Voltaire. "I will not speak to you here of the painful horror inspired in me by this design. I beseech you at least to suspect that from your high rank you can scarcely see what is men's opinion, what is the spirit of the times. As a king, it is not told you — as a philosopher and a great man you see only the examples of the great men of antiquity. You love Glory, and today you place it in dying in a manner which men rarely choose and which none of the sovereigns of Europe has thought of since the fall of the Roman Empire. Alas, Sire! while loving Glory so much how can you persist in a plan which will cause you to lose it? I have already represented to you the grief of your friends, the triumph of your enemies, and the insults of a certain kind of men who will basely make it a duty to disgrace a generous action."

He can guess that if Frederick did kill himself it would be to be different, to derive Glory from the act. Continuing, he proceeds to an analysis of the King's wails that he has lost all.

"All that I point out to your Majesty is the truth itself. He whom I have called the Solomon of the North surely says much more in the depths of his heart. You feel that if you choose this disastrous course you are seeking an honor which you will not enjoy. You feel that you do not wish to be humiliated by personal enemies; therefore the vanity of despair enters into this gloomy resolution. Let your superior reason plead against these sentiments. It tells you that you are not humiliated and that you cannot be. It tells you that whatever happens to you, you will retain all that could make other men happy, wealth — dignities — friends. A man who is only a king may think himself very unfortunate when he loses his dominions, but a king who is also a philosopher should be able to do without dominions. Moreover I cannot believe but that

sufficient dominions will always remain yours to make you a considerable sovereign."

He has read the Erfurt Epistle and thinks it very fine, except for one small criticism. "The reader would be more inclined to shed tears if you did not speak so often of your own. — I shall die happy," concludes Voltaire, "if I leave you on earth putting into practice what you have so often preached."

VII

Rossbach was Frederick's first and only great battle with the French. He had marched from Dresden to Erfurt. He had with him no more than twenty thousand men when he met Prince Soubise with nearly three times this force on the plain by the village of Rossbach.

The French referred contemptuously to him as *le petit Marquis de Brandenburg*. The old Court favorite, Prince Soubise, committed the inconceivable blunder of circling clear around the Prussians to attack. Frederick watched. At first he could not believe his eyes. Then he realized that only arrogant overconfidence on the part of the Prince could make him expose his flank in such a manner. Immediately Frederick set his army in motion.

Two low hills half-hid the Prussian movements. The French could see them moving, but could not tell exactly what they were doing — they jumped to the conclusion that the little Marquis was running away — pell-mell, a yelling disorganized crowd, the whole French army rushed forward to capture him before he escaped.

Over the brow of the hill swept the Prussian cavalry general Seidlitz and his hussars. "We are lost!" whispered the Imperial general, Hildburghausen, to Prince Soubise.

No cavalry in Europe had been trained like Frederick's. In

a year of peace — so terrible were the charging and jumping exercises — the Prussian cavalry lost as many men from accidents as in a battle. In great compact masses, sometimes twenty and thirty thousand strong, shaking the earth like thunder, they were accustomed to make their charges at the great annual cavalry manoeuvres, the long straight line of troopers saluting the King like a single man as it roared past in a whirlwind of dust and steel. Now, a solid wall of horses and men, Seidlitz and his squadrons struck the French. When the squadrons retired to form again, Prussian artillery opened on the fleeing enemy from the Janusberg. Then Seidlitz charged again.

Rossbach was the first great battle won for Frederick by his cavalry, and how proud of this he was! His father's infantry never got into action at all. Three thousand of the French and Imperialists had fallen, the Prussian casualties were less than two hundred. The enemy losses continued to mount for several days afterwards, for so confident of victory had the Prince been, that he had made no plans to take care of a possible defeat.

It was the first time also that a French army had suffered such a defeat at the hands of an army wholly German. Three to one they had outnumbered him, and he had beaten them! It was a victory impossible except with an opponent like Prince Soubise. Rightly did Frederick when measuring the odds before the war take into account the incompetence that would be shown by the Austrian and French generals.

Rossbach revived all his high spirits. For awhile there was no further talk of suicide. In great glee he composed on the battlefield a poem celebrating the fat receding buttocks of the French as they ran away, and regretting that old King Nicomedes, who seduced Cæsar as a youth, had not been present to feast his eyes on the spectacle.

VIII

Leaving the Hanoverians to battle with senile Soubises, Broglios and Duke de Clermonts, he hurried back to Silesia, where Breslau had again fallen to the Austrians.

With fourteen thousand picked men Frederick left Leipzig. If he made many mistakes he understood thoroughly the war-psychology of quickly following up one victory with another. He meant to prevent the Austrians from taking up winter quarters in Silesia.

"I would attack them if they stood on the steeples of Breslau," he says to his officers. The Austrians too outnumber him three to one, so he thinks it advisable to deliver this harangue in the Roman fashion. "Let me tell you," he admits frankly, "that I intend against all the rules of war to attack this army of Prince Charles, though it is nearly three times our strength, wherever I find it." And he adds, "I shall be in the front and in the rear of the army. I shall fly from one wing to the other. No squadron and no company will escape my observation. Those who act well I will reward, and will never forget them. But the cavalry regiment that does not, on the instant, when the order is given, dash full plunge into the enemy, I will directly after the battle unhorse, and make it a garrison regiment. The infantry battalion which, meet with what it may, shows the least sign of hesitating, loses its colors and its sabres, and I cut the trimmings from its uniform. We shall soon either have beaten the enemy or we shall see each other no more."

The Austrian army, cumbersome and unwieldy, again under the command of the incompetent Prince Charles, lay sprawled out on the plain on a line six miles long. Not to appear frightened by the King of Prussia and his little army, it had of its own accord emerged from its fortified camp near Breslau,

where it would have been safe from attack. Frederick used his favorite *Schräge Ordnung* for concentrating on one point, and thus offsetting the great difference in numbers. While the allied generals were arguing about where he intended to attack he threw his whole army against Prince Charles's left wing and won at Leuthen another great victory.

Prince Charles retreated into Bohemia. . . . Breslau surrendered, seventeen thousand men and thirteen generals becoming prisoners of war. . . . With the exception of the single fortress of Schweidnitz, which Frederick took the following spring, the whole of Silesia had been reconquered.

Luck was favoring him in East Prussia also. Apraxin, the commander of the Russians, suddenly took his army home. The Czarina had fallen ill, and it was known that Peter, in the event of her dying and his becoming Czar, meant to switch over from Frederick's enemy to his ally. Freed on this front, the Prussians were able to drive the Swedes out of Pomerania.

IX

Two great victories — Rossbach and Leuthen — due less to great genius on Frederick's part than to colossal stupidity on that of the Allies, and now two years of equally great defeats which are the result solely of Frederick's wilfulness. Years when he is saved from annihilation only by the lack of coöperation among the Allies who are as colossally stupid in victory as in defeat.

Years of defeat, but also of those quick marches which win for Frederick the same reputation of uncannily turning up with an army when thought a hundred miles away, that used to belong to the first of the Cæsars.

From Saxony back and forth into Silesia. . . . From Silesia back and forth across the Giant Mountains into Bohemia and

Moravia. . . . From all these points back and forth into Brandenburg.

Zorndorf is Frederick's first battle with the Russians. He has always been contemptuous of their fighting powers. At Sans Souci he had laid down the law on this subject to Marshal Keith, who had been for years in the Russian service and thought the Russians good soldiers if well-equipped and properly-officered. Frederick would have none of this — the Russians, compared with the Prussians, were like the Barbarians compared with the Romans, one Prussian regiment could drive a whole army of them into the sea. "Some day," said Keith, politely, "your Majesty may have the opportunity of finding out for yourself." Zorndorf is only a victory for Frederick because he throws away men recklessly.

Then on October 14, 1758, the terrible disaster of Hochkirch. Here Frederick's over-confidence and refusal to take advice costs him the best part of an army and the life of one of his best generals.

"If the Austrians leave us alone here they ought to be hanged," says Marshal Keith, protesting against Frederick's choice of a camp that has absolutely no protection.

"It is to be hoped they are more afraid of us than of the gallows," replies Frederick gaily, refusing to make a change.

At five in the morning he is taken by surprise. He loses more than half his army and a hundred guns. Marshal Keith is dead — Francis of Brunswick, Maritz of Dessau, both badly wounded, are Austrian prisoners. Frederick himself receives a slight wound.

X

The Keiths belonged to the many thousand Scotch and Irish Jacobites who had to seek their fortunes on the continent now that the Stuarts no longer ruled in England.

Marshal Keith had been a long time in the Russian army. There he served under the same Lacy who fought against him at Hochkirch. When Frederick was Prince-Royal at Rheinsberg Keith was fighting against the Turks.

Anger at seeing a subordinate promoted over his head had led him in 1747, one of Frederick's ten peace years, to offer his services to the King of Prussia. Frederick, looking for just such officers, for Keith was famous for his personal bravery, made him a field-marshal.

His brother, Lord Marischal, had also entered Frederick's employ, and was the Prussian ambassador in Paris.

Marshal Keith's body was recognized by Lacy, the conquering Allied General at Hochkirch. He was given a military funeral by the Austrians, and later his body was sent to Berlin.

After the war Frederick had a statue of him put up in Berlin.

XI

Following Hochkirch came Kunersdorf where again wilfulness cost Frederick an army. He had beaten the Russians when he tried against advice to annihilate the retreating army with soldiers who had been marching for twelve hours before the battle began. Victory was turned into defeat. The Prussian rout became more disorderly than that of Hochkirch.

At Kunersdorf Frederick had two horses shot under him, and a third was hit as he was preparing to mount. His clothes were riddled, and a gold snuff box in his pocket was crushed by a bullet. He was surprised himself at his immunity.

"Is there then no cursed bullet that can reach me?" he was heard to mutter.

The cavalry general, Loudon, who, sweeping down on the Prussians as they gave ground, caused this terrible headlong flight, had tried during the peace years to get a commission in

the Prussian army. Frederick had looked at him intently, and taking pride in the ability he believed he had to judge men swiftly and correctly, said aside, "He is a fool!" and refused Loudon's offer as contemptuously as Louis XIV had refused Eugene's. In the Seven Years War Loudon was perhaps his greatest opponent.

Nineteen thousand men, all his artillery and most of his generals — this was the price of Frederick's wilfulness at Kunersdorf.

He resigned the command of the three thousand men he had left to General Finck. He declared his brother Henry generalissimo, and had the army swear allegiance to his nephew, the dead Prince of Prussia's son, now heir to the throne.

"I have no resources left," he said, "and to tell the truth I hold all for lost. I shall not survive the ruin of my country."

XII

To his minister, Finckenstein, in Berlin, he wrote in detail the night of the calamity —

"I attacked the enemy this morning about eleven. We beat him back to the Jews' Church-yard near Frankfort. All my troops came into action, and did wonders. I reassembled them three times. At length I was myself nearly taken prisoner, and we had to quit the field. My coat is riddled with bullets. Two horses were killed under me. My misfortune is that I am still alive. Our loss is very considerable. Of an army of forty-eight thousand men, I have at this moment, while I write, not more than three thousand together. I am no longer master of my forces.

"In Berlin you will do well to think of your safety. It is a great calamity. I will not survive it. The consequences of this battle will be worse than the battle itself. I have no resources

left — and, to confess the truth, I hold all for lost. I will not survive the destruction of my country. Farewell forever."

He then wrote out the paper turning over the army to Finck, and giving some advice which might be useful.

"General Finck gets a difficult commission. The unlucky army which I give up to him is no longer in a condition to make head against the Russians. Haddick will now start for Berlin, perhaps Loudon too. If General Finck goes after these, the Russians will fall on his rear. If he continues on the Oder, he gets Haddick on the flank. However, I believe, should Loudon go for Berlin, he might attack Loudon and beat him. This if it succeeded would be a stand against misfortune, and hold matters up. Time gained is much in these desperate circumstances. You must inform of everything my brother, whom I have declared generalissimo of the army. To repair this bad luck altogether is not possible. But what my brother shall command must be done. The army swears to my nephew. This is all the advice I am in a condition to give in these unhappy circumstances. If I had still had resources I would have stayed by them."

A little later Frederick discovers he does still have resources. Bands of Prussian fugitives are beginning to come in. He now writes to General Schmettau, in command at Dresden —

"You will perhaps have heard of the check I met with from the Russian army on the 13th of this month. Though at bottom our affairs in regard to the enemy here are not desperate, I find I shall not be able to make any detachment for your assistance." He orders Schmettau to do two forms of the impossible — first to hold Dresden, secondly only to surrender it — "if you have liberty to withdraw, with the whole garrison, moneys, magazines, hospital and all that we have at Dresden, either to Berlin or elsewhere, so as to join some corps of my troops. As a fit of illness has come over me, which I do not think will have

dangerous results, I have, for the present, left the command of my troops to Lieutenant General Von Finck, whose orders you are to execute as if coming directly from myself. On this I pray God to have you in his holy and worthy keeping."

Still a few days later he is writing to D'Argens —

"We have been unfortunate, my dear Marquis, but not by my fault. The victory was ours, and would even have been a complete one if my infantry had not lost patience and at the wrong moment abandoned the field of battle."

XIII

Four thousand miles away another general sits writing a letter, which is addressed to his cousin in Paris. He predicts he will be soon defeated. . . . The enemy has the river. . . . The town he is trying to defend occupies a naturally strong position on a rock, but there are no fortifications. . . . His troops have no arms, and are mostly undisciplined natives. . . . He will fight to the last, however, for the town once taken, he believes the whole Colony to be lost.

"I console myself, however, upon this defeat and the loss of the Colony with the conviction I am under that this defeat will one day mean more than a victory to my country, and that the conqueror will have found defeat in his very victory.

"What I suggest here, my dear cousin, will seem to you a paradox, but a moment's reflection upon the situation of things in America will show you the truth of what I say. More than English of Europe these people are English of America. A large part of the Colonists are the children of those men who emigrated to America because they resented the encroachments made upon their human rights by King and Church, and wished to find a place where they could live free and independent — and these descendants still have the republican senti-

ments of their fathers. Others are men who are enemies of all authority — who have indeed been transported to the colonies for their crimes. Others are a mixture of different European nationalities, and who are therefore not bound to England by any ties of sentiment. None, in general, have much respect for the King or the Parliament of England.

"I know them well — not by hearsay but from actual contact with them, and by information given me secretly which one day, if God lets me live, I hope to turn to the advantage of my country. All these Colonies have become prosperous — they are many and rich. They are self-contained, having within their own boundaries all the necessities of life. England has been stupid enough (*assez sotte*) to let them establish their own industries — that is to say she has herself broken the chain of dependence which once bound them to her. Also, and perhaps most important of all, these English colonies would have broken away before to form a separate republic if their fear of us had not held them loyal to England. For masters they naturally preferred their own compatriots to strangers, taking for their rule of conduct, however, as little obedience as possible! But when Canada has been conquered by the English, when they no longer have to fear the French — the first time then that the mother-country crosses their interests, do you think, my dear cousin, that the Colonists will obey? And what have they to fear in a revolution? I am so sure of this as I write that I give only ten years after the conquest of Canada by the English to see it accomplished.

"This it is which consoles me today as a Frenchman for the imminent danger my country is under of seeing this Colony lost to her."

Montcalm is the general writing. The thoughts contained in this prophetic letter were put down in camp at Quebec on the 24th of August, 1759, twelve days after Frederick's defeat at

Kunersdorf. Three weeks later Wolfe made the night surprise attack which won Quebec for England, and cost both him and Montcalm their lives on the Heights of Abraham.

XIV

Two years of wilful mistakes . . . of flogging his soldiers back and forth over Saxony, Silesia, and Bohemia . . . of forcing them, when so fatigued with marching they can hardly stand on their feet, to charge impregnable heights in the face of batteries deluging death upon them . . . of browbeating, court-martialing, and disgracing luckless generals. The picture presented by Frederick and the Allies in the Seven Years, or Third Silesian War, is that of a ferocious madman fighting fools. Only because Frederick is King as well as commander can it continue. Whether he loses a battle or wins it Frederick is always the central controlling figure of his forces, and the Allies have none.

All the suffering on the battlefield, all the misery which the war brings to non-combatants, effects him little despite his humanitarianism. He is coming more and more, as he tells himself, to see the earth as from a great distance — from another planet his imagination surveys the tiny crawling creatures whose joys and sufferings are alike of no importance. The more soldiers he sees lying sprawled over the battlefield in the grotesque and ignominious postures of death the more contempt he has for men alive. So after Rossbach he can write gleefully his long obscene poem with its theme of sodomy and the backsides of those Frenchmen running away "dusty and bloody."

Nothing is of importance to Frederick now but the expression of his own will. This is why he becomes so furious when his generals argue with him. This is why he forces obedience

with such terrible punishments. All must be puppets but the King who pulls the strings. And for the puppets, the crawling mites seen from another planet, death in carrying out his orders cannot be thought of as such a terrible thing. For, "Life, if we examine strictly what its course is, consists in seeing one's fellow-creatures die and be born," says Frederick, and this sums up his practical war-philosophy.

He looks out upon the world and what does he see there if not good and evil blended indifferently? . . . Life as an endless chain in which death is a recurrent and necessary link. Creation as incapable of having an existence without destruction. . . . The theory of evolution has not yet been announced, nor Nietzsche's conception of the Superman, but Frederick undoubtedly does see human life in the mass dedicated towards the welfare of the Superior Human Being. He knows the herd ceases with death, but he believes in immortality of the souls of the Great. "If the greater part of the world were to be annihilated, Voltaire, Newton and some other geniuses of this order would surely remain immortal," he said once, silently including himself in the list. Frederick sees nowhere in Nature perfect efficiency, and he does not expect it in himself.

But he never forgives his generals a blunder which costs him a battle. Then he shifts his whole viewpoint. His own mistakes are simply necessary experiments — when he loses a battle or sacrifices an army he admits his mistakes quite frankly, writes and speaks of them in the terms of false moves in a chess game, and tells how he has profited by them. The mistakes of others are crimes against King and Country. His idea of Merit has changed. After the war Frederick will make it almost impossible for men not of noble birth to be officers in his army. A *bourgeois,* dismissed in disgrace after making a blunder, can always go home and enter his father's business. But a noble has only his honor, and when he loses this he has lost all.

This places the officer caste in Prussia entirely at the King's mercy.

In all this there is heartlessness, but from the military standpoint there is a great deal of common sense. Who can say Frederick is not right when he assumes that the mistakes of one all-powerful leader demanding, right or wrong, implicit obedience will in the total sum up to less than those due to the vacillating policy of a number of Allied commanders? At forty-six he has become a military despot, ruthless and inhumanly cruel beneath the mask of patriotism which he puts on and takes off as he pleases. But he will continue to be a great force in war as long as he has the necessary materials out of which to build victories and defeats — men and money. England is sending him subsidies and when the Allies refuse to exchange prisoners thinking thus to wear him down eventually, he forces the captured into his armies. He may be hard, merciless, meddling and reckless, but one thing in war Frederick never is — and he knows this to be a commander's greatest fault — indecisive.

Nor can he ever be accused of cowardice. But it must be remembered that kings in battle are always protected by bodyguards which ordinary generals do not have. Frederick's bodyguard was composed of the finest troops in Europe, and it was their sworn duty to protect the sacred person of the King. He cannot be accused of cowardice, but neither can his lot be compared with that of the common soldier. The soldier is flogged to death for the slightest breach of discipline, he tramps knee deep through the mud while the King rides, he is doing guard duty at night when Frederick recreates himself with philosophy, French verses and the flute. Frederick is never in the front line of attack — nor does he ever stand facing a cavalry charge like his foot-soldiers. He does not make war from his Court like some kings, but he does make it on horseback, surrounded by a watchful staff, and a vigilant bodyguard picked for their

strength and valor. And in moments when everything seems lost he simply quits under pretext of ill-health.

It is Frederick who gets the Glory from the victories. The soldier, whether he wins or loses, suffers. When the Seven Years War was over, the many protestations of affection for his army notwithstanding, Frederick left a large number of the crippled soldiers to destitution and misery. He himself was always prepared to die nobly like Cato when he had no more resources and carried about carefully in a little phial around his neck the poison that he denied them. Besides he had his philosophy to help him. For them there existed only the dreadful reality of the physical hardships, with no glamor of glory surrounding it, for him the loftiness of the idea subordinates such incidental details into insignificance. The more they suffer for him, the more trivial they become. So that, "Come on, you blackguards!" he cries to them, when they hold back, "Do you want to live forever?"

For all his attempts at self-criticism he never really understands his own motives. No matter how candidly he may seem to analyze their sources, the secret springs always remain hidden from him. The enormous part that vanity, the desire to act a tremendous part in history, occupies in his makeup he will never fully admit. Philosophizing and verse writing, in the midst of dead and dying, places him apart from his generals and soldiers. He becomes different from them . . . a mystery. With Voltaire Frederick is Man of Action, with men of action he is Man of Thought. His aim is always to baffle, to mystify, to appear to be more complex than he really is. He cultivates simplicity as a king for just this reason. Like Nature he wishes to be infinitely various, to contain all things in himself, to exhibit all qualities of temperament and genius, and show opposites and contradictions as outstanding features of his amazing personality.

So, after Hochkirch, the remnant of his magnificent Guard, as it filed past the King, saw a mysterious little man in a cocked hat sitting on the ground drawing figures in the sand as though a battle won or lost was a very trivial matter in the cosmic scheme of things he was planning. And so, four days later, when Frederick heard that Wilhelmine was dead, he exclaimed, "Great God! My sister of Bayreuth — my noble Welhelmine — dead! Dead in the very hours we were fighting here!"

That she should die at the moment of the battle — this was the significant, the mysterious, thing. Her death, his mother's, his brother's, coming all at this time, did they not prove to men that he was fighting not only human enemies but the gods? Frederick's grief at Wilhelmine's death was theatrical, insincere, a formal and ostentatious parading of an emotion he did not feel, and out of all proportion with the way he had neglected Wilhelmine since her marriage, the patronizing attitude he had taken towards her as the wife of an insignificant German princeling.

Wilhelmine, at first envious of her royal brother, had later wanted to shine in his reflected grandeur. She called him in her letters to Voltaire the greatest man of his age. She played up to his talk of suicide. Both brother and sister saw themselves as heroic characters in the forbidden Greek history they used to read together as children.

Both too saw themselves as splendid material for modern epics. — "You will have fine material for tragedies," wrote Wilhelmine to Voltaire, at the time when the suicide talk was at its height. — "Collect all your powers to raise a monument to her honor," Frederick wrote to Voltaire after his sister's death. "You need only do her justice. Without in any way abandoning the truth she will afford you an ample and beautiful subject."

Wilhelmine, like Frederick, while affecting the female phi-

losopher, was proud, haughty, affected and overbearing. She never forgave their father for not marrying her to the Prince of Wales, as her *Memoirs* amply show. She never really forgave Frederick either for not doing more for her after he became king — taking the position that he owed all his success to her.

XV

After Kunersdorf Frederick managed to gather together a new army — and what did he do with it?

Kunersdorf would have been his end except for quarreling among the Allies, and the fact that in the uncertain state of the Czarina's health Peter's power was growing. The Russian army, having achieved the victory, did nothing, though so close to Berlin. Their commander had an argument with the Austrian general, Daun, and withdrew. Daun, always afraid of Frederick, retreated into Bohemia as winter was coming on.

Frederick exulted. The Pope was now meddling in the war — he was trying to work up a Crusade against the Protestant king. Clement XIII had sent Daun a hat and a sword, both blessed. He called Frederick an infidel, and refused to give him the title of king — the Romish court-calendar, whenever it referred to Frederick, called him simply the *Marchesi di Brandenburgo*. Frederick scoffed at all this. He jeered at Daun as the Blessed General with the Hat. He welcomed the Pope's meddling, as now to his soldiers the war had definitely taken on a religious aspect — if the Allies won, the Inquisition would once more appear in Germany. In England, where the great Pitt championed Frederick, the King of Prussia's picture now hung in taverns as the bulwark of Protestantism on the continent.

"I am a poor heretic," writes Frederick mockingly. "I have never been blessed by the Holy Father. I never attend church. I worship neither God nor the devil. Often have those shaven

scoundrels, the priests, declared that I have become extinct. But behold the caprice of Fortune. After a hundred preferences of my rivals, she smiles upon me, and packs off the hero of the hat and sword, whom the Pope had blessed, and who had gone on pilgrimages. He skulks out of Saxony, panting like a dog whom the cook has flogged out of the kitchen."

He writes these lines jeering at the Austrian, and at the same time orders General Finck, stationed at Maxen, to attack Daun as he retreats. Finck protests — he is vastly outnumbered — the Prussians are in no position yet to take the offensive. Angrily Frederick orders him to do as he is told and not to argue. "Get it done!" he writes. "You know I cannot tolerate the making of difficulties!" Finck, by following Frederick's orders literally — and, knowing the King's treatment of officers who deviate from instructions by the slightest detail, he does this rather than use any judgment of his own — is forced to surrender with his whole army corps.

This further disaster brings to the Marquis D'Argens the following note from Frederick —

"Ill luck, which persecutes my old age, has followed me from Kunersdorf to Saxony. The little Ode on Fortune was written too soon. One should not shout victory until the battle is over," adds the King of Prussia rather tritely. "From day to day I grow more weary of dwelling in a body worn out and condemned to suffer. Astonishment, sorrow, indignation, and scorn all blended together, lacerate my soul."

As soon as Finck is released from Austrian captivity Frederick has him tried by court-martial, sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and dismissed in disgrace from the army. A broken man, this general, whose only crime consisted in having carried out Frederick's orders, and upon whose shoulders the King had not hesitated to place the terrific responsibility of continuing the war after Kunersdorf, died in Denmark.

Frederick writes to Voltaire —

"I have the lot of others who play in public — applauded by some, despised by others. But I concern myself very little in what way my actions paint themselves in the brain of beings not always thinking, with two legs and without feathers."

XVI

For some time Frederick has been trying to use Voltaire as a medium through whom to influence France to make peace with him. "Virgil wrote verses as beautiful as yours but he never made a peace. If you succeed that will be an advantage you have gained over all your colleagues on Parnassus," says the King of Prussia. But in these very letters he continues flinging the personal insults which make peace impossible.

Voltaire's patron, the Duke de Choiseul, has become French prime minister. In June, 1760, when nothing seems to be resulting from the peace overtures, Frederick writes angrily —

"What is the meaning of this pacific air your Duke affects towards me? You say he cannot act as he would wish. What do I care what he wishes if he is not free to act accordingly? I have no time to waste in these futilities."

He refuses to admit his writings about Louis XV have done harm. Or if so, what of it?

"I have said nothing against him. I bitterly regret having written in verse more good of him than he deserves. And if during the present war of which I consider him the promoter I have not spared him in some of my pieces the reason is that he exasperated me and that I am defending myself with all my weapons however blunt they may be. Moreover these odds and ends are not known to anybody — " it is the King, who gets so much of his own information from spies and eavesdroppers, who feigns this magnificent ignorance of others knowing what

he says and writes in his letters! " So I do not understand these personalities you speak of, unless you mean de Pompadour. However I do not think a King of Prussia owes any deference to a Miss Poisson, especially if she is arrogant and fails in the respect she owes to crowned heads."

He tells Voltaire that he has in his camp a girl from Westphalia who, a German Joan of Arc, will bring him success.

" This is how I reason. Good King Charles drove the English out of Gaul with the help of a maid, it is therefore clear that with the help of my maid I shall conquer the three Whores."

A few months later he throws the Duke into the same bag with the three Whores and Brühl and shakes the lot of them up contemptuously.

" I do not know the Duke de Choiseul from Eve or from Adam. It matters little to me whether his sentiments are peaceful or warlike. If he loves peace why does he not make it? But let us stop talking about these illustrious scoundrels, these scourges of earth and humanity. I have to deal with half a dozen knaves and sluts who would confound a Socrates, a very Marcus Antoninus."

Frederick becomes very angry when he hears that Voltaire is working on a history of Russia.

" Tell me, what do you mean by writing a history of the wolves and bears of Siberia? What can you relate of the Czar which cannot be found in the life of Charles XII? I shall not read the history of these barbarians! "

When Damiens stabs Louis XV with a penknife, and the royal person of another monarch is also attacked, Frederick gives vent to his contempt for humanity in general and his sense of the sacredness of kings.

" The abominable enterprise of Damiens, the cruel attempt upon the King of Portugal, are among those crimes which occur in peace as well as in war. In spite of the philosophic schools

man will remain the most malevolent beast in the Universe; superstition, self-interest, vengeance, treason, ingratitude will produce bloody and tragic scenes until the end of time because we are governed by passions and very rarely by reason. There will always be wars, law-suits, devastations, plagues, earthquakes, bankruptcies. These are what make up history."

And when Voltaire seems to be talking back, the Philosopher-King quickly defines philosophy for him—

"Are you wise at seventy? Learn at your age in what style you should write to me! Understand there are liberties permitted to, and impertinences intolerable in, wits and men of letters. Become a philosopher—that is to say reasonable."

XVII

During the whole of the severe winter which followed General Finck's surrender at Maxen Frederick kept the wreck of his army camped in the snow near Dresden. While here he did a great deal of verse-writing, and a new edition of his poems was published. He wrote to Voltaire reprimanding him for his vindictiveness in pursuing beyond the grave with his hate Maupertuis, who, long since fallen out of Frederick's favor, had died, neglected by the King, last summer.

"Flesh and blood revolt against such tyrannous command," exclaimed Frederick, referring not to his suffering soldiers and himself, but to his own treatment by Fate, "but it must be followed. If you saw me you would scarcely know me again. I am old, broken, grey-headed, wrinkled. I am losing my teeth, and my gaiety. If this goes on there will be nothing left of me but the mania of making verses, and an inviolable attachment to my duties, and to the few virtuous men whom I know." In another letter he saw the Christian God also among his enemies. "Don't forget a poor philosopher who perhaps to

expiate his incredulity is doomed to find his purgatory in this world."

Again, not on the spot himself, so knowing less about the situation than the officer who was, he ordered this time General Fouquet in Silesia to accomplish the impossible. Fouquet's army was annihilated, the general himself wounded and taken prisoner. Silesia was now almost wholly Austrian again.

But at Liegnitz luck at last favored Frederick. He had again taken up one of his reckless positions. Wrapped in his cloak he was sitting at dawn on a drum by one of the camp fires when a drunken deserter from the Austrians was brought to him, and told the King that General Lacy at that very moment was marching to take him by surprise. Leaving his camp fires burning, which Lacy had also done, so as to appear unsuspecting, Frederick instead surprised Lacy, and changed what would otherwise have been a defeat into a victory.

Had Leignitz come earlier, it might have been important, but now Frederick knew it had brought him no nearer to winning the war — it had simply saved him from destruction. Sick in body, he was genuinely tired of the struggle.

"I have the labors of Hercules to perform," he complained, "at an age too when my strength is leaving me — when my infirmities increase — and to speak the truth when hope, the only consolation of the unhappy, begins to desert me."

XVIII

October, and the Russians and Austrians in Berlin.

Prince Eugene of Wurtemberg, marching forty miles a day, brought five thousand Prussians to strengthen the garrison. Hulsen brought nine thousand more. Berlin surrendered on the ninth. The Russians occupied it three days. But Frederick, despite his many defeats, had by now built up that fear of him-

self which was Cæsar's. On the news that he was coming in person to relieve the capital, the Russians retreated into Poland, and the Austrians into Saxony.

Frederick, hearing of this, did not go to Berlin. He crossed the Elbe to fight Daun. During these black months Frederick's obstinacy, if it kept repeating itself in the same grandiloquent threats of self-destruction which he had no intention of making good, lifted him, not as a philosopher certainly, but as stubbornness incarnate, to levels of genuine greatness. The Allies too were becoming exhausted. If he gave up Silesia the war might end. He would not give it up — not a single village of it!

"I will never make a disadvantageous peace!" he shouted defiantly, and then the old story. "Either I will bury myself under the ruins of my country, or if that consolation appears too great to the destiny which persecutes me, I shall know how to put an end to my misfortunes when it is no longer possible to bear them. After having sacrificed my youth to my father, and my maturer age to my country, I think I have acquired the right to dispose of my old age as I please."

The tragedy always centers in himself, never in his desolate country. It is Frederick that Destiny, like a monstrous Frederick William with dripping fangs, consistently persecutes. The nearest Prussia can come to Tragedy is when it furnishes the ruins.

"Indeed how many reasons has one at fifty years of age to despise life," continues the man who is such a strange combination of courage, tenacity and self-pity, and who sees himself objectively as one of the great tragic figures of history. "The prospect which remains to me is an old age of infirmity and pain, with disappointments, regrets, ignominies and outrages to endure. In truth, if you really consider the situation you ought to blame me less than you do. I have lost all my friends. I am unfortunate in all the ways in which it is possible to be. I

have nothing to hope for. I see my enemies treat me with derision while their insolence prepares to trample me under foot."

Another victory quickly — or his English subsidy will stop. In every battle during the latter campaigns of the Third Silesian War the numerical odds against Frederick are at least two to one. But his reputation for stopping at nothing has grown proportionately. Now, before the battle of Torgau, he says to his generals, "I have called you together, not to ask your advice, but to inform you that tomorrow I shall attack Marshal Daun."

The Marshal's army is on the heights above the Elbe. Here a strong natural position has been made stronger by earth-works sheltering four hundred guns. But Frederick, to inspire confidence when he sees the dismay in the faces of his officers, makes the very strength of the position unfavorable to the Austrians.

"I am aware," he says, "that the Marshal occupies a strong position, but it is one from which he cannot escape. If I beat him all his army must be taken prisoners or drowned in the Elbe. If we are beaten we must all perish. This war is becoming monotonous. You must all find it so. We will, if we can, finish it tomorrow."

A terrific artillery fire greets the Prussians when they leave the shelter of the forest and start the climb. "What a hell of a fire!" says Frederick calmly. "Did you ever hear such a cannonade before? I never did."

Two attacks are repulsed. The King of Prussia is hit by a caseshot which would have killed him had its velocity not been almost spent. It knocks him unconscious. When he regains consciousness he says angrily to the officer bending over him —

"Get out of here! Go and stop the runaways!"

Marshal Daun has been less fortunate. His leg shattered, they carry him from the battlefields. He resigns the command to General Bucow. General Bucow's leg is shot off within a min-

ute of taking command. General O'Donnell now commands the Austrians.

The November dusk has darkened to night. O'Donnell orders a retreat. The Austrians cross the Elbe. Frederick spends the night prowling around his camp talking with the soldiers at their camp fires. He has won the heights, but night, by allowing an orderly retreat of the enemy, has snatched from him that overwhelming victory of a Cæsar who drowned so many countless thousands of Barbarians by driving them into rivers. Still, has he not accomplished what was said to be impossible? The day has killed off most of his few remaining generals but are not new ones growing up whose enthusiasm will be fired by such heroic exploits? In men his losses have been heavier than the Austrian, but he can say proudly —

" We have saved our reputation by the day of Torgau. I drove the enemy to the gates of Dresden."

But all the good done him in England by the victory at Torgau is swept away by the death of his uncle, George II, news of which reaches Frederick on the battlefield, a week after the event.

XIX

The death of George II marked the end of Pitt's power in England, and Pitt was Frederick's greatest friend on the island.

Pitt had originally been of the party opposed to spending English money for the purpose of protecting foreign Hanover, the troublesome property brought along with him by the Elector George when he succeeded Anne as King of England. He was thinking in a broader field than the one which contained Holy Roman Empires and Pragmatic Sanctions — that of colonization.

He saw France trying to bring together Canada and Louisiana until they embraced the whole of North America. He saw

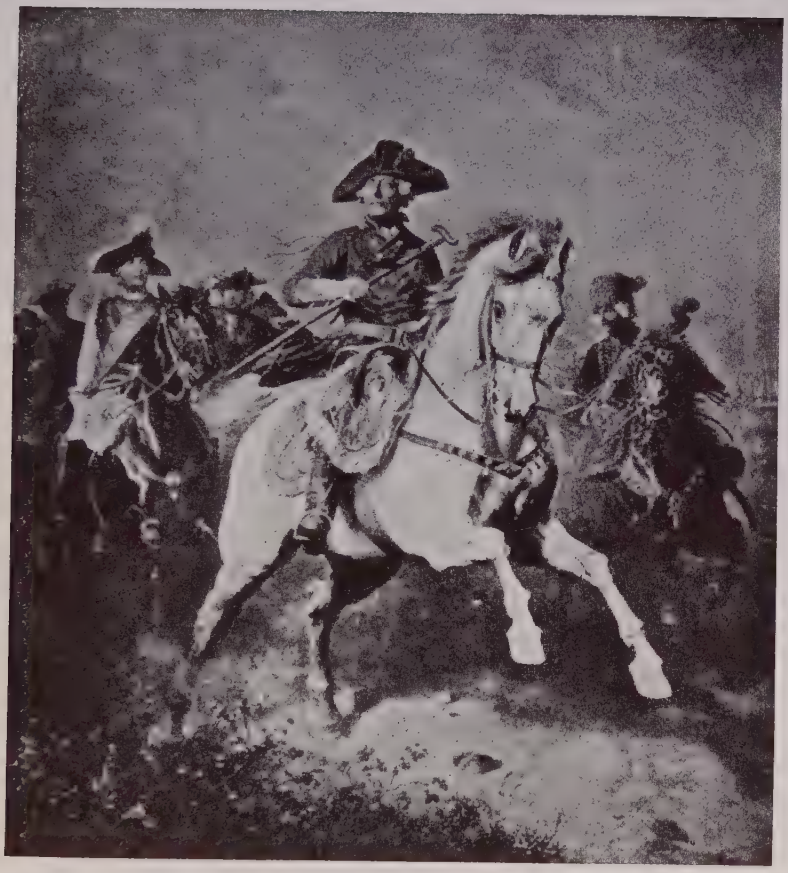
Dupleix winning the friendship of the natives in India. The gain or loss of great colonies in the East and the West was more vital to him than anything which might happen to Hanover. When war broke out with France in America, India and at sea before the outbreak of the Seven Years War he had favored the alliance with Frederick. He knew that the English generals were even more incompetent than the French, and thought it better to furnish the King of Prussia with money and let him do England's fighting on the Continent.

In November of 1756, at the age of fifty-eight, Pitt at last achieved real power as secretary of state. He put through the subsidy treaty that for four years after Leuthen kept Frederick supplied with money — two and a half million dollars a year.

This was not much, but Frederick had a way of stretching it out to go further. He took these English subsidies, and melting up the gold and silver coins added copper until recoined he had two dollars for one. This debased coinage he forced upon the people of Prussia and Saxony.

It was Pitt who was responsible for the English successes in India and America. Clive in India had obtained the victory at Plassey which so shook French prestige among the natives; when Pondichèry fell French rule there came to an end. Lally, the officer in the Irish Brigade whose suggestion of bringing up cannon to a certain point had changed Fontenoy from a defeat to a victory, and who later, sent to India to complete the work of Dupleix, defined his policy in the vigorous five words *Plus d'Anglais dans la Peninsule!* — No Englishman on the Peninsula! — had received no support from home and finally was recalled to France and beheaded for failure. It was Pitt too who sent Wolfe to Quebec.

Frederick had no reason to be, and was not, grateful for these colonial victories thousands of miles from his own problems. But during the four years that Pitt was in power he always re-



Frederick the Great

ceived his money. Lord Bute, who took the place of Pitt under George III, was not interested in supporting Frederick. India and America had been won, France was humbled on the high seas, why continue this expensive war? He began making secret overtures to the Allies upon the subject of a separate peace.

XX

"If I fall I shall date my destruction from that infamous day at Maxen!"

Rage shakes Frederick whenever he thinks of General Finck, whom he never forgives. Surrender brings crashing to the ground that whole system of discipline upon which the expression of his will depends.

Likewise, regicide is to him the crime of crimes. During the Third Silesian War there were several attempts to capture or kill the King of Prussia. The one which came the nearest to being successful occurred when he was living near Strehlen. A Baron Warkotsch agreed to betray Frederick into the hands of Colonel Wallis. The man who took messages back and forth between them opened one and was terrified at its contents. He took it to the King.

"You are decidedly an instrument for my safety in the hands of a higher Power," said Frederick, in a low and solemn voice, standing close beside him, and fixing him intently with his eyes. He believed it himself. How many times had he escaped death miraculously on the battlefield! But what Frederick feared most was a plot of his generals in the Roman fashion. For this reason he was not sorry to see the older ones killed off, and a new crop continually taking their place. As Labienus, Brutus and Cicero, having grown up with him, knew the weaknesses of Cæsar, so the Schwerins and the Dessauers knew Frederick's, and it relieved him to see them go. The younger ones grew up

in the shadow of his greatness. Frederick was always alert for mutiny, and this was one reason why he insisted upon having his orders carried out implicitly.

As the Seven Years War progressed the fame of the fighting King of Prussia spread to the East — that East which always so excited the imagination of Napoleon. When Frederick's fortunes were at their lowest an incident very gratifying to his vanity as an ancient hero occurred — there arrived an envoy from the Khan of Krim Tartary, with offers of friendship and troops.

Frederick had always had a liking for Eastern habits and ways of thought, particularly the importance attached to friendship, and the attitude towards women. Baron Goltz went back with Mustapha Aga. He was to lead sixteen thousand Tartars through Poland along the Carpathians to Kosel where they would arrive in March. The Khan also promised to make a drive against Russia. Frederick was fighting the two great western enemies of the Orientals, the Russians and the Austrians. An event was already predestined to make this alliance unnecessary, but Frederick snatched at it now.

From the Crimea Goltz wrote and told Frederick how much the Eastern potentate admired him. . . . This was pleasing. . . . Like the King of Prussia Mustapha suffered from hemorrhoids. . . . Frederick sent his own physician to treat him.

With Turkey also he was having negotiations. Ever since coming to the throne Frederick had tried unsuccessfully for an alliance with the Porte, realizing the value of Turkey against Austria and Russia. In March of the year 1761 a treaty of amity between Prussia and Turkey was finally concluded. The Sultan began to collect an army near Belgrade. The Turks and the Tartars Frederick had hopes would now keep at least the Russians busy.

XXI

Through the winter of 1760–61 the Allies had concentrated in Bohemia and Poland seventy thousand Austrians and sixty thousand Russians. Never had Frederick dashed about more than he did this spring. He darted back and forth — striking here — striking there — while the two main bodies of the Austrians and the Russians, the former entering Silesia from Bohemia, the latter from Poland, tried to effect a junction. His aim was to keep them apart as long as possible. Finally, in August, he was between the two armies in the very heart of Silesia.

Now he became a real Roman. He still held the two fortresses of Schweidnitz and Striegau. He dug in between them. Two shifts of twenty-five thousand men worked with shovel and pick for a month. At the end of this time he had constructed the fortified camp of Bunzelwitz, which was the marvel of its day.

The camp was surrounded with trenches sixteen feet wide and sixteen deep. Under all the batteries were placed mines to be exploded if captured.

Six miles to his west was Hohenfriedberg where sixteen years ago he had won his great victory over the Austrians, slaughtering the mouse as it emerged from the Giant Mountains. Hohenfriedberg was the Russian headquarters now. The Allies had him cornered, but it did them little good. Frederick had taken care to advertise well the fact that there were mines under the camp which would be exploded in case of an Allied victory. If the King of Prussia was willing to blow up his whole army, burying himself in the fragments, the besiegers were less anxious to achieve Glory in this way. The Austrians waited for the Russians to go first, the Russians waited for the Austrians. . . Weeks passed — still no attack was made. . . . Winter was

coming. One night the Russian camp caught fire, and the next morning the Russians had started for home. Frederick boldly detached part of his army to destroy the Russian baggage trains. He himself broke up the Bunzelwitz camp and hurried to Neisse. He was no sooner gone than Loudon stormed and took Schweidnitz. Frederick pretended to be tolerant with Zastrow, the general in command of the fortress, but this tolerance was only on the surface. When the general asked for a court-martial to exonerate him, the King answered, "I impute nothing of crime to you, but after such a mishap it would be dangerous to trust you with any post or command." Zastrow was another of Frederick's generals who died in poverty and disgrace.

Frederick himself was still only taking lessons. He wrote at this time —

"The school of patience I am at is hard, long-continued, cruel, nay barbarous. All that human foresight could suggest has been employed and nothing has succeeded. If Fortune continues to pursue me, doubtless I shall sink. It is only she can extricate me from the situation I am in. I escape out of it by looking at the universe on the great scale like an observer from some distant planet. All then seems to me infinitely small."

These lines were written in Breslau, the last winter of the war. They reveal once more Frederick's attitude towards the calamities of war. They show how he finds relief by looking at himself objectively in his own words as in a mirror. Only philosophy, he continues, enables him to bear it.

"What would become of us," he asks, "without this reasonable contempt of things frivolous, transient and fugitive, about which the greedy and ambitious make such a bother, fancying them to be solid. This to become wise by stripes, you will tell me. Well, if one do become wise what matters it now?"

Then, suddenly, a miraculous flash of self-revelation —

"I have all the properties of a stage-hero — always in danger,

always on the point of perishing. One must hope that the conclusion will come soon, and if the end of the piece be lucky we will forget the rest."

XXII

The day after Frederick wrote this, the Czarina Elizabeth died. Peace with Prussia! was Peter's immediate command. All Russian conquests were to be given up, the Russian army was to come home.

By now the feelings of the new Czar towards Frederick amounted to idolatry. On his finger, in a ring, Peter wore a portrait of the King of Prussia. Instead of the Russian Order of St. Andrew, he wore on grand occasions the Prussian Order of the Black Eagle. He had memorized the Prussian military regulations, he knew every detail of Frederick's campaigns. As a first step towards Prussianizing the Russian army the Czar ordered the uniforms to be changed, so that his soldiers, at least in appearance, would resemble Frederick's. The Czar was prouder of having been made the honorary colonel of a Prussian regiment by Frederick than of being commander-in-chief of the Russian army. He went further than simply making peace with Frederick, he sent an army of twenty thousand men to help the King of Prussia against the Austrians.

Frederick appreciated this hero-worship, and was grateful for the help, but he was privately convinced that the Czar was unbalanced mentally. He could see the danger of going too far. What he could get away with Peter could not. Shaving off the beards of the priests, telling the great princes that from now on there would be no power in Russia except that of the Czar, forcing officers to imitate the Prussians in everything — poor young Peter was starting something here he could not finish. There would be a plot to depose him if he antagonized the clergy, nobles, and army too much. Frederick wrote to Peter advising

moderation in his enthusiasm, and in particular spoke in favor of the German wife Catherine whom he had married to Peter and whom Peter had grown to hate.

But what Frederick feared happened. In July the stronger-willed Catherine deposed Peter, locked him up in a fortress, and a few weeks later had him strangled by one of her lovers. Just when Frederick with his Russian allies was making ready to attack the Austrians, the Russian general received orders to come home. The King of Prussia asked Czernitschef as a personal favor to postpone his departure for three days. He did not have to fight — if he just stayed where he was, thus giving the Austrians the impression that he was still with Frederick, it would be enough.

Frederick then attacked and defeated Daun. After the victory he presented the Russian general with a gold sword set with diamonds. Czernitschef in return gave him two dromedaries.

Frederick always in later life spoke kindly of poor strangled Peter, the strange instrument predestined by Fate to save him in the end. He never forgave his allies, the English, for their treachery in trying to stop Peter from helping him, and for cutting off his subsidies — he gave one of his English horses the name of Bute and used it at Potsdam in the palace gardens for hauling manure.

When Catherine discovered from Peter's letters that the King of Prussia was not responsible for her dead husband's behavior to her, but had tried to persuade him to treat her better, she became for awhile his friend, and, if she did not send an army to help him as Peter had done, she was willing to make peace.

Austria, with Turks assembling on the Hungarian frontier, and with Maria Theresa's son, Joseph, like Peter, also an admirer of Frederick, and France, played out, were likewise willing.

Frederick could not make peace in Vienna as he had hoped seven years ago, but he did make it in Saxony at the castle of Hubertusburg near Dresden.

The long and terrible war was over. England had won America and India. Frederick kept Silesia.

Part Seven

GLORY

I

AT the close of Seven Years War Prussia's condition was as terrible as after the Thirty Years War. The population had decreased by half, deserted villages and towns were everywhere to be seen in this desolate country, women did the men's work in the fields. The general misery and want was pitiful. While the dead killed in battle only numbered two hundred thousand, disease and destitution had carried off six times this number. Commerce and industry had almost ceased to exist. Germany's most fertile plains on the banks of the Oder and the Wesel were uncultivated deserts.

But Frederick, despite the impoverished condition of his country had managed when the war ended to extort from it the money requisite for another year's campaign.

Not around the country, not around the people, but around himself, he saw all this tragic desolation revolving.

"It is right," he said, "that the good citizens and the public should rejoice at the peace. For me, poor old man that I am, I return to a town where I know nothing but the walls, where I find no longer any of my friends, where great and laborious duties await me, and where I shall soon lay my old bones, which can be neither troubled by war, by calamities, nor by the wickedness of men."

On Prussia's misery he climbs and stands — this man old, wrinkled, and worn at fifty-one, but still very much alive — the greatest military figure of the age. With the disdainful gesture of a tragic actor, he waves away the world's admiration.

"I would far rather have written Racine's *Athalie* than have performed all the achievements of this war," says Frederick.

II

Great Destroyer he has been, now he will be Great Creator.

Frederick makes a tour of inspection of his kingdom soon after the Peace of Hubertusburg, and while impressed by the terrible condition of the war-torn country, his viewpoint is mainly that a relentless Fate and the inherent evil of mankind as expressed in his enemies have wrought all this havoc which he will now repair.

"To form an idea of the general wretchedness," he writes, "and how great is the desolation, you must represent to yourself countries entirely ravaged, the very traces of the old habitations hardly discoverable. Of the towns some are ruined from top to bottom, others half destroyed by fire. Of thirteen thousand houses the very vestiges are gone. There is no field in seed, no grain for the food of the inhabitants. Sixty thousand horses are needed if any plowing is to be carried on. In the provinces generally there is half a million population less than in 1756 — that is to say, upon four millions and a half the ninth man is wanting. Noble and peasant have been pillaged, ransomed, foraged, eaten out by so many different armies, that nothing is now left them but life and miserable rags.

"There is no credit given by trading people even for the necessaries of life. There are no police in the towns. To habits of equity and order there have succeeded a vile greed of gain and anarchic disorder. The silence of the laws has produced in

the people a taste for license. Boundless appetite for gain is their main rule of action. The noble, the merchant, the farmer, the laborer, raising emulously each the price of his commodity, seem to endeavor only for their mutual ruin. Such, now that the war is ended, is the fatal spectacle over these provinces, which were once so flourishing. However pathetic the description may be, it will never approach the touching and sorrowful impression which the sight of it produces."

A pathetic and terrible picture, indeed, but the more glory to him who restores it to its former flourishing condition.

The money on hand for another campaign comes in useful for this purpose. So do the army horses, now turned over to the plows. The debased coinage minted during the war, Frederick gradually brings up to normal. The problem of the tons of paper money issued by him, the King of Prussia solves in a very easy way — he declares it all to be worthless.

At the same time to show the world that he is far from being ruined — and like Cæsar who, after impoverishing Italy by his wars with Pompey, then constructed magnificent edifices in Rome — he has work started on a splendid new palace at Sans Souci.

" The harm done by war can soon be repaired by a provident administration." Bad as the situation is, Frederick is confident that a few years of peace will work wonders. Soon the war will be only a memory. He himself is alive, that is the main thing. Had he been killed that for Prussia would have been a real calamity.

III

The Seven Years War being over, he starts a history of it. In this story of the great struggle Frederick does not belittle the part played in his victories by chance and the incapacity of his opponents — he knows that victories, no matter how

gained, are enough in themselves to make a military man's reputation.

He takes up his writing again, and he also again tries to be a royal patron. As he cannot get the greatest Frenchman, he tries for the next best, begging D'Alembert to be Perpetual President of his Academy now that Maupertuis is no more.

Frederick had been giving the French scientist a small pension for several years in the attempt to lure him to Prussia. During this period Voltaire had also been in correspondence with D'Alembert. After Frederick's victory over the French at Rossbach, Voltaire wrote, " The King of Prussia is always writing me verses, now like a desperado, now like a hero. He has obtained at last what he always wished — to beat the French, to be admired by them, and to mock them." He added, " I do not advise you ever to go and fill Maupertuis' place at Berlin."

In June of 1763, D'Alembert went to Prussia but only for a two months' visit. He preferred humble independence in Paris to Frederick's grand offer, and politely refused it as he had already refused Catherine's offer of post of tutor to the Czarevitch Paul.

At Sans Souci Frederick tries to bring back the old days with Voltaire. There he walks and talks with D'Alembert. But his step is no longer quick and jaunty, and he often leans on a cane. What gout has stolen from him here, however, he makes up for in the talking. Never has his tongue wagged on at such a rate! At first D'Alembert tries to get in a word edgewise, then he gives up trying and allows the encyclopedic deluge to pour over him without hearing it any more than in a storm he hears the drops of rain on his hat. It is to D'Alembert that Frederick says he would rather have written *Athalie* than won all the battles of the war. He also says of his victories, " It was mostly chance," but he by no means believes it.

When D'Alembert suggests that the day on which peace was

signed must have been the greatest day of his life, Frederick says sententiously —

" The best day of life is when one quits it! "

IV

D'Alembert had a philosopher-friend named Helvetius, in whom Frederick was keenly interested. Helvetius had antagonized the French clergy with a book *De l'Esprit.* But before he was told to leave France he had become rich as a farmer-general.

The King of Prussia needed money badly. Under the Bourbons, France might be heading towards destruction, but one thing about them Frederick admired, and this was their ability to wring taxes from an impoverished country. He invited Helvetius to come and show him how to do this in Prussia.

Frederick issued a cabinet order which stated that from now on the administration of the customs and excise was to be withdrawn from the General Directory and given over entirely to French officials. Whole bands of people promptly left France *pour exploiter la Prusse.* De Launay was the chief official. Under him were fifteen hundred French employes, paid to persecute the Prussians, and who appear in the same light as would, in present-day America, the agents for enforcing prohibition, were these suddenly all to become English through the arbitrary act of some anglomaniac president sitting in the White House. This was the famous *Regie,* so hateful to the Prussians.

But the *Regie* got Frederick money and that was all he cared about. Murmurs of a revolution meant nothing to him — he always had his army to take care of that. " The people say what they like," he said calmly, " and I do what I like."

The *Regie* brought about the saying —

"The French were beaten at the battle of Rossbach by the Prussians, but they are now taking their revenge."

Never had Prussia been so French. The great Louis XIV wig, so offensive to Frederick William, had ceased to be the fashion, but what would Frederick's father have said at sight of all these French popinjays handing down the law everywhere? Yet the increase in revenue brought about by the *Regie* was very small, perhaps three-quarters of a million dollars a year, and certainly not worth all the bitter feelings and smuggling it gave rise to.

A revolution, which would sweep away a whole system of society, was to break out in France, because of the crushing taxes and misgovernment. But if Frederick permitted graft in the collection of his money, he spent it usefully. All went either to strengthen the army, into a war chest, or to reconstructing Prussia. The Man of Action forcibly took their money away from the people — The Man of Thought gave it back to them as he saw fit.

V

In 1769, when Frederick is fifty-seven years old, a glimpse of him through the eyes of the Prince de Ligne.

Maria Theresa was still alive. But her husband, the business-like Grand Duke, who during the Seven Years War had sold supplies to Frederick as well as the Allies, was dead. Their son Joseph, now Emperor, had made several previous attempts to see Frederick but his mother had always stopped him. Joseph had ambitions to be to Austria what Frederick had been to Prussia. He had visited all the battlefields of the war, putting up memorials to the Austrian dead.

The Seven Years War was in the past now, the blood had long since soaked down into the battlefields, tortured cries no longer troubled the air, six successive crops of wheat had flashed in the sunlight since the Peace of Hubertusburg, and the war

from a sordid shambles had now become a grand historic event — the tourist who found a skull wrapped it up carefully and took it home with him.

The Prince de Ligne, an observant young aristocrat who did some writing, was in Joseph's suite when Frederick, at his request, crossed over from Silesia into Moravia to see the Emperor.

Throughout the interview Frederick played the part of a submissive elector. The King of Prussia and his officers all wore white Austrian uniforms, so that they seemed part of the Emperor's suite. In all that he did Frederick observed imperial etiquette down to the slightest point — in his rôle of humble elector, he kept one step behind the Emperor in every thing. When the Emperor put foot in the stirrup to mount, Frederick took his horse by the bridle, when the Emperor threw his leg over Frederick put his foot in the stirrup, and so forth and so on. Several times, when Frederick took snuff, he said, as he brushed his coat, "I am not clean enough for you gentlemen. I am not worthy to wear your colors." This affectation of humility seemed to annoy the young Emperor.

He could not praise the Austrian generals sufficiently. But every now and again his colossal conceit would emerge. When De Ligne asked him why in his writings he had praised so highly a certain old Austrian general everyone else thought a fool, the following little dialogue took place.

Frederick. "I thought him a man of merit."

The Prince. "He never did you any harm."

Frederick. "He captured some of my magazines."

The Prince. "And let your generals escape."

Frederick. "I never beat him." That said all.

Frederick spoke of himself as a bungler. He said — "Do you know who taught me the little I know? Your old Marshal Traun. Ah! there was a man, indeed!"

Whenever he exclaimed, Ah! or Oh! or *Mon Dieu!* which he

very frequently did, De Ligne noticed the pious way in which he put his hands together.

His susceptibility to flattery was very obvious. They discussed Marshal Daun. Frederick spoke of him as a genius. Daun might have been a good general against the French, observed the Prince, but in all his battles with the King of Prussia there was one great trouble. — "Will you permit me to inquire what that was?" asked Frederick. — "He always saw your Majesty thunderbolt in hand like Jove, ready to pulverize his army." — Frederick rubbed his hands together, rolled his eyes, and altogether looked very pleased.

De Ligne noticed other things. How Frederick's attention wandered when others were talking. How he scarcely said a sentence without making a "little excursion to Rome or Greece." How eager he was to parade his boldness in not being a Christian.

It had been raining heavily. Frederick insisted that he was responsible for the rain — he always brought bad luck.

"Your soldiers have been saying, 'Peace is made, and yet here is that devil of a man who has no religion, annoying us still.'"

"If your Majesty is really the cause," said the Prince, always a courtier, "it is very wrong because the making of rain is only permitted to Jupiter, who has good reasons for all he does." Frederick again beamed.

In his indifference to the sufferings of the common people — in his attitude that war was the sport of kings — it is indeed as Jupiter that Frederick next speaks.

"I am sure I beg your pardon for having so tormented you in those seven years. I am sorry for humanity in general, but a fine war of apprenticeship it was." Does he really give a thought to the thousands of war-cripples dying or dead in abject poverty? "I made faults enough to teach you all, you young men, to do better than I." Then Frederick's real love for

the pageantry, the pomp of war, breaks loose—"*Mon Dieu!* how I love your grenadiers! How they have defiled before me! If the god Mars should want to raise a guard for his own person, I advise him to take those fellows without choosing further."

The misery, the brutality, the ferocious cruelty, all the anguish contained in those seven long years, has been transmuted into Glory—something glamorous to talk about, and to excite others to repeat.

There was no question but that Frederick wished to be considered an authority on every subject. War . . . the arts . . . medicine . . . literature . . . religion . . . philosophy . . . morality . . . history . . . legislation . . . how to make pottery . . . he laid down the law on them all. His voice was soft and pleasant.

"It was this perhaps," reflected the Prince afterwards, "that prevented one, I think, from perceiving at the time that like the heroes of Homer, he was, if sublime, rather garrulous." Only when Frederick took snuff, or blew his nose, had the Prince de Ligne been able to carry on his end of the conversation.

Voltaire was dead when the Prince saw Frederick a second time. The King talked about the French, told how much he had always admired them.

"But, *Mon Dieu!* what have they done with their men of letters! Voltaire was excellent. D'Alembert, whom I esteem in some respects, was too forward. He wanted to make too much effect in society. Were these the men of letters who gave such grace to the court of Louis XIV, and received it in return? *There* was the patriarch of Kings!"

A King of France, says De Ligne, is always the patriarch of men of talent. "They are a bad lot, these authors," mumbles Frederick, plainly thinking of the Voltaire experience. "It would take the Devil to govern them."

He continues awhile on the theme of French greatness under Louis XIV. Corneille — Bossuet — Racine — Condé — how many men of genius served the Grand Monarch!

"I have heard, Sire, that your Majesty has said, 'If any one wanted to make a fine dream —'"

"*Mon Dieu!* that is true — to be King of France!"

But the Prince gallantly suggests that for men nowadays it is to be King of Prussia.

VI

An interesting feature of the Seven Years War was the large number of descendants of Scotch and Irish refugees from the lost cause of the Stuarts who officered the Allied armies. These soldiers of fortune were capable and fearless men who, with such odds in their favor, would have won the war a dozen times over but for the incompetent Court favorites who commanded them.

There were the Lacys, father and son. Old Marshal Lacy in the Russian service; his son in the Austrian. The latter it was who defeated Frederick at Hochkirch and gave Keith his military funeral.

There were Wallis and Browne, the two able officers who had they possessed full authority would have ended Frederick's military career in the First Silesian war. The Wallaces had been in Austria a hundred years before Frederick was born — since 1612. Browne was German-Irish. A cousin, also a Marshal Browne, was in the Russian service as governor of Riga.

There was Count Lally who fought with the Irish brigade at Fontenoy, and whose suggestion, for which the Duke of Richelieu received most of the credit, turned a French defeat into a victory — and who was brought home in disgrace and beheaded for failing to keep India.

There was Loudon, the man who after twenty years of service

with the Russians and Austrians offered his services to the King of Prussia before the war broke out and was turned away because Frederick did not like his face. Loudon became almost the outstanding Allied general of the war. He was a cousin of the Lord Loudon sent at one time to take charge of the English forces in America.

Under Daun there was an O'Donnell, and General Ogilvy was the commandant of Prague. Maguires and "Fitzgerals" were innumerable.

But all these were held down by the incompetent Neippergs, Prince Charles's, Prince Soubises, Dukes of Richelieu, or Dauns, too frightened of Vienna to take any chances. When towards the close of the War Loudon captured Schweidnitz he was reprimanded and had his command taken away from him for having gained this victory without instructions from the Aulic Council. At the same time Maria Theresa's husband, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, was selling supplies to Frederick.

VII

The young schoolmaster who had ridden on the same boat with that musician to the King of Poland who so declaimed against kings was now one of Frederick's closest confidants.

Catt was with Frederick during several campaigns of the Seven Years War. He read to Frederick, and he was obliged to listen when Frederick read to him — or recited passages from Racine or his own poetry.

Frederick did not read well. His voice was straining always to give a proper dignity to the sublime passages — it rolled along monotonously, never varying in inflection. He talked French exclusively, and only recited French verses, never any German — he constantly put the accent in the wrong place, mispronounced, and made false elisions.

Frederick held the theory that the brain was more active walking than sitting — he therefore always walked as he talked, and Catt ran at his side.

Catt had the job of bringing visitors to the King at Sans Souci. It was he who introduced Zimmermann.

The schoolmaster could see by now how characteristic of the musician to the King of Poland was that remark of his about the man sitting in the garden smoking who could not be happy. As Frederick grew older his penchant for making sweeping statements on things he knew nothing about became more and more pronounced. Catt heard him pass in review all subjects, all times, all peoples. He was an authority on everything. The first few weeks this amazing fund of knowledge interested Catt, then it became very tiresome.

Catt helped Frederick with his literary work, correcting his French spelling and the Latin quotations Frederick so liked to use, and generally wrong. Frederick tried to compete with Voltaire in volume of output. He wrote countless epistles to his relatives and his generals, essays on the Art of War, histories of his campaigns, burlesque poems like the *Palladion* in imitation of Voltaire's *Pucelle, Memoirs,* even a Sermon on the Last Judgment. In his *Memoirs* he passed over his whole youth in the line, " We must forgive the faults of the children, because of the greatness of the father."

But that outburst after Kunersdorf — " After sacrificing my youth to my father — ! " ? And why did Frederick ever bring the schoolmaster Catt to Prussia — approach him on the boat and say so abruptly, " Who are you, sir? " Had the name of his fellow-traveller, perhaps heard casually rising up from the steerage, revived memories of the long ago?

VIII

While never forgiving England, so that he would never make an alliance with this country, with Russia, which had saved him in the Seven Years War, Frederick was always friendly. Three years after the Seven Years War, though disliking Catherine personally, he had made a defensive treaty with her. There was a secret agreement between them to keep Poland in a state of anarchy. Several times the Polish nobles wanted to elect the King's brother, Prince Henry, their ruler, but Frederick would not permit this.

Poland, he thought, had made enough trouble in the history of Europe. The monarchy being not hereditary, it meant a war almost always when a King of Poland died. Besides Frederick wanted Polish Prussia. Only when he got it would Prussia and Brandenburg form one continuous country. There were years of intriguing in Poland, of industrious cooking up of revolutions, to create an excuse for the partitioning.

Both Catherine and Frederick were eager to partition. Maria Theresa held out for some time, but in 1772 unwillingly consented. The Empress-Queen, within the limits hedged in by her divinity as a Hapsburg ruler, had a strong sense of right and wrong. The stealing of Silesia by Frederick, which led to their lifelong struggle, had seemed to her a very wrong thing to do, and this was why to the end of her days she always called him the bad man. Now she was to take part in a similar theft from Poland! But Maria Theresa was getting old, Kaunitz controlled her completely, and he favored the partition. She gave in, but at the same time put her repugnance at the act into the following document —

"When all my lands were invaded, and I knew not where in the world I would be brought to bed with my child, I relied on the righteousness of my cause and the help of God. But in this

thing, where not only public law cries to Heaven against us, but also all natural justice and sound reason, I must confess never in my life to have felt in such trouble, and I am ashamed to show my face. Let Prince Kaunitz consider what an example we are giving to all the world, when, for a miserable piece of Poland, we throw our honor and reputation to the winds. I see well that I am alone and no more in vigor. Many great and learned men will have it so. Therefore, I must, though to my very great sorrow, let things take their course."

A third of Poland was seized. For his share Frederick took Polish Prussia, the thirteen thousand square miles connecting his province of East Prussia with Brandenburg. This put him in possession of the mouth of the Vistula, so that Polish merchants had to pay tribute to him to reach the sea, Frederick thus became the first real King *of* instead of *in* Prussia.

Writing to Voltaire, the Philosopher King had tried to prove the partition just.

"I know that Europe in general regards the partition of Poland as the result of political intrigues which are attributed to me — yet nothing could be more false. Having in vain proposed different expedients, it was absolutely necessary to have recourse to that partition to avoid a general war."

In the history of his reign he wrote the direct opposite.

"One must have been either without address or buried in stupidity not to have profited by an opportunity so advantageous. I seized this unexpected opportunity by the forelock. By dint of negotiating and intriguing, I succeeded in indemnifying our monarchy for its past losses by incorporating Polish Prussia with my old provinces. This acquisition was one of the most important I could make, because it joined Pommern with East Prussia, and because, rendering us masters of the Weichsel River, we gained the double advantage of being able to defend

East Prussia, and to draw considerable tolls from the Weichsel, as all the trade of Poland goes by that river."

To Catt, curious to know how he would get out of the circle of reasoning he had drawn around himself, Frederick had said, "I shall skip over it." To Voltaire, who seemed hesitant of looking upon him as a benevolent peace-maker, the Man Who Stopped the War, he said, "Let this be enough about the affairs of Poland!"

In his works he continued — "We will not here expatiate on the rights of the three powers. It required indeed an extraordinary concurrence of circumstances to induce minds to agree to this partition, by which alone a general war could be avoided." There had actually been much difficulty in coming to an agreement — but this was mainly due to differences of opinion upon how much of Poland each of the partitioning powers should get.

Frederick called the new province his Canada, and liked to dwell on its wretched condition when he relieved Poland of the task of administering it. In his letters to Voltaire he referred to himself as the Lycurgus or the soul of these barbarians, and described his new province much as an explorer, a Columbus, would a strange continent.

"Only think, in this wretched country the rights of property were unknown. Instead of laws the strong oppressed the weak with impunity. — But that is all over! — Good order shall be maintained for the future. It is only in time, and with a better education of the youth, that it will be possible to civilize these Iroquois."

IX

Louis XV died in 1774. He was succeeded by his grandson, a stout young man who amused himself making locks.

Frederick said different things of the Well-Beloved now.

Louis XV had been his contemporary. Frederick, as his life slipped away, looked with a bilious eye upon the younger generations, and was inclined to view indulgently all who belonged to his own.

"If Louis XV had a weakness for the clergy," he wrote, "it was quite natural. He was reared by priests in superstition the most stupid, and he was surrounded all his life either by devotees, or by persons who were too good courtiers to shock his prejudices. How often was it said to him, 'Sire, God placed you upon the throne to protect the Church. The sword which He put into your hand is to defend the Church. You bear the name of Most Christian King only to be the scourge of heresy and unbelief. The Church is the true bulwark of the throne — its priests are divine organs, who preach submission to the people. They hold consciences in their hands, you are therefore more the master of your subjects through their voices than through your armies.' Let such discourses be often enough repeated to a man who lives in dissipation, and who employs not a single moment of his life in reflection, and he will believe them and act accordingly. This was the case with Louis XV. I pity him, and condemn him not."

Madame de Pompadour had been dead ten years. After her had come Madame du Barry, and the little preparatory school where girls of fourteen and fifteen were taught by experienced courtesans how to revive desire in a king sexually worn-out. The golden age of Bourbon misrule — of the four hundred millions spent by the Grand Monarch on royal palaces — of the fortune which annually was used up by Louis XV to operate the costly and inefficient waterworks at Versailles, while the people of Paris dipped water in buckets from the dirty Seine and peasants ate acorns — was coming to an end. Louis XV never worried. "As long as I live," he said, "I shall be able to have my way — but I pity my grandson."

In this contrast of magnificence and squalor which obtained in France under the Bourbons there was always something that secretly appealed to Frederick. It represented despotism in the grand disdainful manner which his own conscience prohibited him.

A daughter of Maria Theresa, Marie Antoinette, was now Queen of France.

X

The year following it seemed that Frederick was to go too.

He fell very ill with gout, and perhaps also he exaggerated his illness just to see what effect the news of his approaching death would have on Europe.

Van Swieten, ambassador of the Imperial Court at Berlin, and a doctor's son, was certain that Frederick had dropsy and would die within the month. He so notified Vienna.

The young Emperor Joseph, who admired Frederick in the same way that Frederick had admired Eugene, saw his chance to get back Silesia.

He mobilized his army. From Bohemia, where the Austrian concentration took place, the troops were to march into Saxony, and from there to the Brandenburg frontier. Either Frederick's successor agreed to give back Silesia or there would be war.

But all this was dependent upon Frederick's death. Impatiently Joseph waits for it to happen.

He was ambitious to be another Alexander, to bring back that prestige of Austria in Europe which Frederick had been responsible for destroying. He wanted to annex Bosnia and Servia . . . to seize Bavaria when the Elector died . . . to enlarge Austrian territory in the Tyrol. . . . So many splendid plans!

So certain was Joseph of Frederick's death that he made no attempt to keep his troop movements secret. All Europe knew about them and laughed afterwards.

And then Frederick did not die. He got well — and again he kept Silesia.

XI

Frederick's last war — the Potato War.

Like his first, nearly forty years ago, it is with Austria. The motive also is only a variation of the old theme. When he invaded Silesia at the age of twenty-eight it was to take away part of Austria, when he goes into the Potato War at the age of sixty-six it is to prevent Austria from becoming larger by swallowing up Bavaria.

Prince Kaunitz had first tried to persuade Frederick to agree to a partition of Bavaria by offering him a share. Frederick refused to have any hand in the business. As the Austrian diplomat was leaving the room Frederick called him back, handed him the piece of tape with which the map, that he had unrolled to show the King of Prussia just what would be his share, had been tied, and which in his chagrin Kaunitz had left on the table, and said virtuously,

" Take this with you. I do not like to appropriate to myself what belongs to another."

It did not suit Frederick's plans to partition Bavaria as he had Poland. He entered the war in the rôle of Defender of Germany.

His health was too poor for him to go to the Potato War on horseback — Frederick had to travel in a carriage. " But on the day of battle," he says, when addressing his generals, and telling them they can do likewise, " you will see me on horseback, and then I hope you will all follow my example."

His old enemies, Loudon and Lacy, commanded the Austrian army under the young Emperor. But Maria Theresa, anxious

about her son's life, became tremulous when the Prussian army entered Bohemia. Joseph was timid about going into his first battle with Frederick the Great. Frederick like Eugene did not want to be beaten in his old age. So though the war lasted through a winter and spring no battle was fought. Nevertheless it cost Frederick thirty million dollars and twenty thousand men.

"This war," he wrote, after peace was made, "and this peace, are miserable affairs, the work of an old worn-out man without energy and buoyancy."

It got its name from the fact that nothing happened except skirmishes between the armies for forage and food — hay for the horses and potatoes for the men.

XII

During the Potato War Voltaire died.

The excitement of his homecoming to the capital after twenty years of exile — "I do not want Voltaire to come to Paris," had said Louis XV curtly, whenever the subject was mentioned — had killed Voltaire, though, eighty-four years old, he was perhaps ready to die anyway. Because of the hatred of the priests his body had to be smuggled out of Paris and buried secretly in a little country churchyard.

Voltaire's death was an event for Frederick. The Philosopher King had an opportunity to show the difference in intelligence between himself and the Bourbon, Louis XVI, who, if he had looked the other way when Voltaire returned, only did so because forced to by public opinion. At his winter quarters in Breslau, Frederick wrote a eulogy upon his dead friend which he sent to Berlin to be read at a special meeting of his Academy. He also sent a copy of this eulogy to D'Alembert, now secretary of the French Academy. In the letter that accompanied this

enclosure, can be discerned a marked satisfaction on Frederick's part that Voltaire's death was predestined to occur when he had a war on hand and so could write the eulogy in camp as a warrior-poet.

"Here is that *éloge* on Voltaire," writes Frederick, "half minuted down in camps, half corrected in winter quarters. I am afraid that the French Academy will find fault with the language, but how can one speak French well in Bohemia? I have done what I could. The work is not worthy of him whom it is designed to celebrate, but at any rate I have availed myself of the liberty of the pen, to have that declaimed publicly in Berlin which people scarcely dare whisper to one another in Paris."

Despite this eulogy, Frederick seldom spoke kindly of Voltaire. Why had not Voltaire been his historian? As the Prince de Ligne noticed, he dwelt on Voltaire's pettinesses.

Since the Seven Years War they had been in frequent correspondence. Frederick even half admitted that for past misunderstandings he might have been partly in the wrong. He could at times see himself quite objectively — had a curious way of calling attention almost proudly to the evil in himself — seemed in the same breath to be inquiring, Are even the gods perfect?

In these letters poet and King exchanged in their old age, Frederick told about his reconstruction of Prussia, Voltaire described similar works on a smaller scale he was doing at Ferney. It amused Frederick to see Voltaire so obviously playing the king on his few little acres of ground. This proved to him that the philosopher had all his life regretted not being born one. He saw inconsistency also in the pacifist urging him to drive the Turks out of Europe.

Had Voltaire been born a king, Frederick often thought, would he not have opened himself to all the criticism that

Frederick had? Yes, then he would have realized the enormous gulf between theory and practice, the idea and the deed?

A scribbler, a glowing glorious thought-worm. . . . Crawling around always among ideas, leaving a bright trail of beauty and wit behind him wherever he went, but still a worm . . . aspiring to, but never reaching the awful heights of Action. . . . What real experience of life did Voltaire have? Frederick thinks over his own active career — the starlit nights in camp, with bugles blowing — the marches — the battlefields. *Mon Dieu!* how immense the distance that separated them. He himself had lived like one of the Old Testament kings, his life packed with action, with figures contorted into shapes expressive of every human emotion and feeling. Voltaire — yes, Voltaire had lived like a monk!

But what good taste the man had — and what verses he could write!

XIII

Two years after Voltaire, died Maria Theresa, the last of Frederick's Three Whores.

The Czarina Elizabeth had died during the great struggle, Madame de Pompadour the year after it ended. The Clothes-Horse too was dead. The Bad Man survived them all.

A beautiful girl of twenty-three when Frederick invaded Silesia. . . . Now a fat severe old lady in the sixties.

" Maria Theresa is no more," says Frederick to his ministers. " With this event commences a new order of things."

Echoes from the past! Which says this — a young King of twenty-eight, or an aged monarch of seventy? Forty years ago, on hearing of the death of the Emperor, Frederick had written to Voltaire, " This little event changes the whole political situation in Europe."

So long ago! *Mon Dieu!* Frederick puts his fingertips

together. Does he remember that forty years ago he was saying just what he is saying today? It is as though that old order he saw vanishing with the death of the father had taken a new lease on life in the body of the daughter.

His life then has only marked time? He has become perhaps the greatest soldier of his age, but he has not achieved what he set out to achieve? After all these years of struggle the German Empire that he dreamed of in his youth, an empire free from the domination of Austria, with its capital in Berlin instead of Vienna, remains a dream?

No, imperceptibly the change has come. Prussia is now a great power like Austria and France. Frederick has won for it dignity, and perhaps some day the Empire will follow.

Whether sincere or not, Frederick claims to have admired Maria Theresa.

"I am sorry for the death of the Empress-Queen," he says. "She has done honor to the throne and to her sex. I have been at war with her but I have never been her enemy."

Another of his contemporaries passing on to the land from which no one has yet returned.

Frederick can say such words now because he is no longer eaten up by that feeling of inferiority, those gnawings of resentment at the prestige of Austria, which consumed him when he came to the throne. He has become the peer of the Empress. People are crowding to Berlin to see the King of the Age—Frederick the Great.

Perhaps Frederick's greatest triumph is the fact that Joseph so admires him.

"Now are my wishes fulfilled," said the Emperor at their first interview. "I have, at last, the honor to embrace the greatest of soldiers and kings."

And the man who says this is the son of that haughty empress who implied, if she did not say it outright, that the King of

Prussia was only fit to hold the basin for the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to wash his feet in! Though to the end of her days Maria Theresa never admired Frederick, he feels he has completely conquered her in the admiration of the son.

XIV

Frederick never liked the famous contemporary of his old age — Catherine the Great. He was jealous of her. But for political reasons, and remembering dead Peter, he always kept the peace with Russia.

Catherine had murdered Peter. She competed with him as Voltaire's patron. When a statue of Voltaire by Pigalle was proposed, Catherine was one of the first subscribers. She bought watches from his factory at Ferney. Voltaire dedicated books to her, and when he died she bought his library.

This woman attracted too much attention. Frederick, perhaps, was jealous that she could lead so full a sex-life, and still govern well.

Catherine returned Frederick's dislike. She called herself proudly a pupil of Voltaire's, and she knew how the Master had been treated by the King of Prussia. She took it for granted that Frederick also had learnt all he knew from Voltaire. She despised him for the lack of interest he took in women, saw him pathologically as scarcely a man at all.

A robust and carnal woman, there was something repellent to her in the picture of this King who surrounded himself with men. Catherine had lovers one after the other, and she viewed Frederick's abnormal sex-life with disgust.

No, Frederick was not completely a man to the amorous Czarina. She thought the same of his brother Henry when he came to St. Petersburg in January of 1771.

A little man much below average size . . . very thin . . .

who struts pompously to conceal a naturally mincing walk. . . . Large, blue, squinting eyes. . . . The upper lip drawn up in the middle when he smiles, which he seldom does.

All his strength, they say, lies in his hair, which is very long and thick. Perhaps this is the reason why he will have nothing to do with women — he fears a Delilah.

At a fancy dress ball given at Petersburg in his honor he stands around looking like an effeminate owl. So much on his dignity is he, that a Frenchman, dressed up as a parrot, takes the liberty of mocking him as he hops past with cries of "Henry! Henry! Henry!"

The Prince draws up his little body, and does not seem amused.

XV

The *Regie,* meanwhile, had made Frederick tremendously unpopular.

The French customs officials were indeed the prohibition agents of 18th century Prussia. Looking for contraband they committed every outrage. A familiar trick of theirs, after breaking into a house in the middle of the night, was to put coffee, salt or some other dutiable article that they had brought with them into a cupboard and then collect the fine.

The offices were so profitable that the four chiefs began quarreling over the graft almost immediately they arrived in Prussia — two of them fought a duel in the first year — one was killed. Frederick divided his salary among the remaining three.

Each of these chiefs received a salary greater than the prime minister. Their business was to squeeeze money out of the people, and if they could do that they were well worth their salaries to Frederick.

The debased currency problem had been settled in true Frederickian fashion. The paper money which he had forced upon

employes was worthless. The metal money he had issued was worth not its face value but only what gold or silver was in it. When the richest man in Prussia, who owned the big porcelain works started up with patents stolen from Dresden after the occupation, went bankrupt because of these rigorous measures, Frederick bought the plant for himself cheap, and it was thenceforth known as the Royal Porcelain Manufactory.

Only a country awed by a monarch with the prestige of Frederick's military reputation could be made to tolerate the *Regie* — this system of exploitation by foreigners. Frederick jeered alike at the *Regie* officials for being thieves, and at the people for submitting.

" I am tired of ruling over a nation of slaves," he exclaimed once.

Echoes from the past again? After abusing the son, had not the father jeered at him? " If my father had done this to me I would have killed myself, but he has not the courage."

But frequently Frederick is royally philanthropic. Why, he asks his minister, Michaelis, are certain tracts of land, that he saw on the Brandenburg frontier of Saxony when going to the Potato War, uncultivated? The answer is — because the people are too poor to work them.

" Why was not this mentioned to me before? " demands Frederick angrily. " You know that when anything in my dominions is beyond the ability of my subjects it behooves me to take the responsibility upon myself, so that they may have nothing to do but reap the fruit. I herewith assign three hundred thousand dollars to bring those lands into tillage, and if that sum is not sufficient I will give more."

It is by no means uncommon for Frederick thus to place himself on the side of the people. When a soldier, fined two hundred thalers for having in his possession some bootleg

tobacco, appeals to his King, Frederick writes on the margin of the sentence —

"Before confirming this sentence, I should like to know where the soldier, who gets 8 groschen (fifteen cents) in the five days, will find the two hundred crowns for paying this fine."

De Launay puts a tax on imported cattle. The King writes to him —

"This tax would fall on the poorer classes. I am by office, protector of the poor and must defend them."

He prefers to pass on the onus for the hated *Regie* to the officials, while himself appearing benevolent.

"The King often reduced the imposts upon the lower classes without saying a word to me," wrote De Launay, after leaving Prussia, "and thus exposed himself to a considerable decrease of revenue." But this consideration for the poor did not prevent Frederick from hounding De Launay for more revenue, so that in the end the extortion was the same.

He, who had to be made acquainted with the minutest detail of other affairs, did not care to know the details of this oppression.

"I should like to know how things are going on," he wrote once to De Launay, "but give me no details. Just say, 'Middling well' — I shall know what it means."

XVI

He is the King of the Age, and people come far to see him.

Two Emperors. Joseph, with his "My wishes are fulfilled now that I have the honor to embrace the greatest of soldiers and kings." Paul, Catherine the Great's son, heir to the throne of Russia, with his "At last the wish is fulfilled that I have so long cherished. I can contemplate the greatest

of heroes, the admiration of our times and the wonder of posterity."

Lesser lights like the Prince de Ligne with his "Nothing but laurels appear to live in Prussia."

French and English officers who have fought in America. The Comte de Ségur, Lafayette, Lord Cornwallis. They come to attend Frederick's grand military manoeuvres no longer kept secret. Ségur in his description of the King of Prussia reveals the secret of that attraction which draws people to Frederick after the Seven Years War, and sends them away marvelling.

"I contemplated this man with extraordinary curiosity," writes the Count. "Vast in genius, I beheld him small in stature, and bent as if under the weight of his glory and his long toils. His blue coat, worn out like his body, his long boots coming up above his knees, and his waistcoat covered with snuff, formed a singular but yet imposing *tout ensemble*. The fire of his eye indicated that his mind had not grown old. For though he carried himself like an invalid, still there was something about him which told you that he could fight like a young soldier. Notwithstanding his low stature, he appeared to the imagination of one who approached him greater than other living men."

Appeared to the imagination! — That is it! — Frederick has captured the imaginations of men and to this extent the dream of his youth has come true. His name like that of Cæsar now stands for more than a mere man — it carries along with it attributes of grandeur and omnipotence — excellences vague as that "something about him" which is the more real to Ségur by virtue of Frederick's very physical insignificance.

The man actually seen by Ségur and others who, bringing their admiration with them take it away again, is small and shrivelled up, very foul-smelling, for Frederick has long since ceased to wash, drooping and insignificant, filthily dressed, his

dirt-brown cheeks hectic with spots of coloring like a prostitute's. But neither Ségur nor any other visitor sees this man. They see Frederick the Great in all his Glory.

XVII

Another very different class has flocked to Prussia from all parts of Europe.

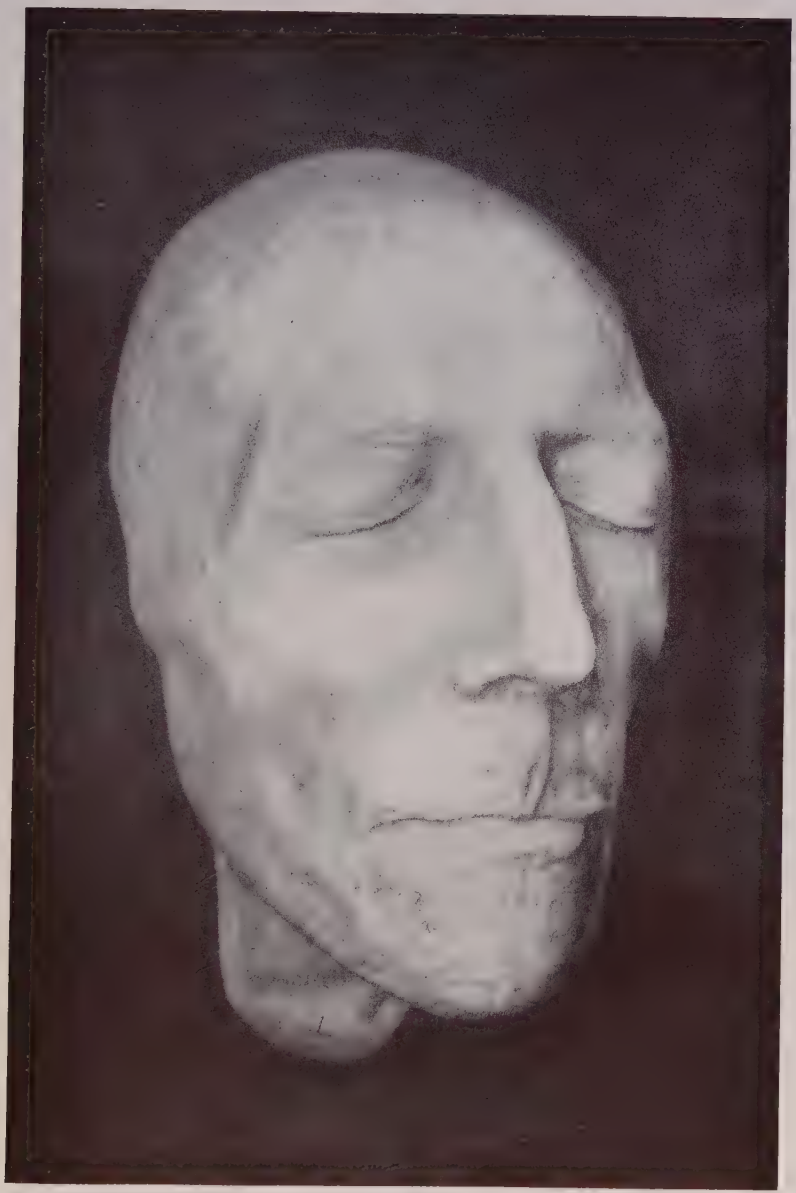
These are the men attracted by the stories of the beautiful pages — no women at Frederick's court — all the details of his sex queerness. They too are here *pour exploiter la Prusse,* if in a somewhat more personal manner than the *Regie* officials.

These male harlots, each of whom hopes to become the King's favorite mistress, swarm the streets of Potsdam and Berlin. To and fro they promenade, wearing large cravats, their hair elaborately perfumed and powdered, taking mincing steps, with rouged cheeks and scarlet lips, and often in pairs like prostitutes.

When they first arrive their thoughts are only of Frederick, then as hopes and money dwindle they begin approaching any influential-looking old man on the street, until finally, sunk to the lowest level, their shrill voices can be heard accosting ordinary soldiers.

Berlin alone has a garrison of twenty thousand men. To serve all these, many women prostitutes are in the capital also. These are heavily taxed, so that Frederick draws quite a large revenue from them.

The house of Professor Formey, Perpetual President of Frederick's Academy, is directly opposite to one of the palaces of ill-repute. The Professor is shocked by some of the scenes he sees take place across the way as he watches from his own windows, thinks it a bad environment for his daughters. To his



The Death Mask

complaints Frederick, in no mind to have his revenues diminished because of the prudishness of a professor, replies —

"My dear Formey, at your age and mine one can do nothing — then let others do who can."

The Prince de Ligne, when talking with Frederick the second time in 1781, mentioned letters Frederick had found in the Palatinate which told how Eugene in his youth played the woman with soldiers for money.

"What — do you know all my badnesses?" said Frederick, smiling. "I ought never to have told what I found out because a great man — "

"Not only has the upper hand of his enemies," interposed De Linge, as the King hesitated, "but — "

"Yes," finished Frederick, "such as Cæsar, Alexander, Vendôme and Catinat."

The large amount of homosexuality among the troops Frederick took very lightly. All the soldiers were discouraged to marry, but his Guard was forbidden to do so. When complimented upon his fine-looking young officers Frederick would smile and say yes, but in a way they were the ruin of the army, demoralizing as they did the older generals.

XVIII

When Frederick was a youth, a foreign diplomat said of him, "The Prince-Royal likes better than anything to bring out the ludicrous side of people so that he can laugh at them."

At seventy he still has this trait. With his growing contempt for mankind it has become an active desire to humiliate. People of low birth, the clergy, Prussian officials who carry out his orders and the *Regie* personnel, his generals, doctors, all indeed who are powerless to strike back, feel the sting of his tongue.

He orders the *Regie* agents to pay no respect to rank in the

discharging of their duties. But when a Princess slaps the face of one of them and keeps the dress he is trying to collect duty on, upon complaint being made to the King, Frederick, after benevolently saying he will pay the duty, then in the manner of Solomon, hands down the following judgment —

"The dress shall remain with the Princess, the slaps with him who received them. As to the pretended dishonor I entirely relieve the complainant of that. Never can the appliance of a beautiful hand dishonor the face of an officer of customs."

Quintus Icilius is an officer who was commanded by Frederick during the Seven Years War to loot the King of Poland's palace at Hubertusburg in retaliation for what the Allies had done to his Berlin palace. "Whenever I speak to you, dear Quintus Icilius," is a standard joke of Frederick's, "I cannot help recalling Hubertusburg and mechanically clapping my hands to my pockets."

He goes out of his way to insult commoners. Since the Peace of Hubertusburg he has kept pushing out of the army officers not of noble birth. One day at dinner he says —

"I don't know why it is, but commoners are no good for officers even when I ennoble them."

A general present makes bold enough to question this statement, and mentions, with apologies to his Majesty, a certain colonel whose ability quite refutes it. Frederick repeats the name several times, as though remembering it, then says arrogantly what is not true —

"I know better than you. Colonel —— is of a very old noble family."

On the other hand he sneers at the nobles.

"In case a miracle should take place and a Count turn out well he must not puff himself up with the idea of title and birth for these are all fooleries. Everything depends on personal merit," says Frederick in a different mood.

At the reviews he finds fault with his officers over everything. They do not know how to lay out camps, they do not know how to execute orders, they are fools, cowards, everything.

"It is not my purpose to lose battles by the base conduct of my generals," he shouts furiously on one occasion.

When a joke is at his own expense Frederick likes it far less. One day he makes his Master of Horse a present of a snuffbox on the lid of which he has had painted an Ass. Count Schwerin, much mortified, but quick-witted, has the Ass taken off the lid and the King's portrait put there instead. Wishing to make a fool of his Master of Horse when the Duchess of Brunswick happens to be in Berlin Frederick mentions the snuffbox and asks the Count to let the ladies see it. The Count hands it to the Duchess, who exclaims to Frederick —

"What a good likeness! — The resemblance is perfect! — This is the best portrait of you, Brother, I have ever seen."

Frederick turns very red, nor is he amused when he sees how the Count has outwitted him.

At every opportunity he humiliates his doctors, though he is always sending for new ones to tell him what is the matter with his health. As soon as he feels well he refuses to follow orders, then dismisses the doctor angrily when he falls sick again. Charlatans, he calls them, and fools.

Here again Frederick has a standard joke. Every new doctor he asks abruptly —

"Well, how many graveyards have you filled?"

More than one doctor badgered by the King may have felt like asking his Majesty the same question.

XIX

A mysterious woman is to be seen at times wandering around in the palaces.

She wears a large straw hat which she very rarely takes off. From beneath the brim of this hat comes the glitter of wild eyes, and a glimpse of a face half eaten away by disease.

This is Frederick's much talked-about younger sister Amelia whom he goes so often to see in his old age. She makes fire-screens and dressing gowns for him.

In Prussia, a tragic and mysterious figure. Some call her the Mad Princess. The King, it is said, tries by kindness nowadays to make up for the terrible way he treated her in the past.

For twenty years her lover, Baron Trenck, to expiate the double crime of daring to aspire to the hand of a sister to the King of Prussia, and intriguing in behalf of Austria, sat manacled in an iron cage six by ten in the fortress of Spandau.

Amelia, good-looking in her youth, had plunged into dissipation, and from it there had emerged the diseased half-paralyzed creature she was now.

For a long time she had been Frederick's favorite sister. Wilhelmine, indeed, noticed that almost immediately after her own marriage Frederick became more attached to Amelia than to her. Amelia never married. She became an honorary abbess.

She had all Frederick's love of cruel mockery, of humiliating people below the royal station who dared not strike back.

With a gesture of moral disdain, Frederick is inclined to point to the debauched Bourbons. But what of his own family? Here is Amelia — here is his nephew, the dissipated heir to the throne who, from spending all his time in the Berlin brothels, has also contracted syphilis. Here is his younger brother, Henri, notoriously degenerate.

And himself, with his rouged face, the red laid on thick over the dirt?

XX

To the end he is Man of Letters. But the older he gets the more Frederick falls behind the times, and the more conspicuous becomes his ignorance. When he read books as a youth it was largely because they were forbidden by his father. Now he never reads new books — only re-reads the old ones.

Two years after Voltaire's death Frederick writes an essay on German literature. *On German Literature, Its Defects, and the Means of Its Improvement,* is the title. This is written in French and shows such an astounding ignorance of contemporary German literature that Frederick's minister, Hertzberg, to whom he reads it at Sans Souci, and who is to arrange for its publication, protests.

"I cannot make any alterations in these bagatelles," writes Frederick on the margin of Hertzberg's letter.

The King of Prussia has never read Klopstock, Wieland, Herder, Abdt, or even the Prussian poets Gleim, Armler, Kleist, Lessing, Karsch. That the latter have sung his praises as hero of the Seven Years War does not flatter him. He wants Homers or Voltaires to tell coming generations about his greatness, not provincial Germans who lack good taste. "We have no good writers whatever," he tells D'Alembert.

But he believes that if Germany ever does develop a national literature it will be because of him.

"You will laugh at me for the pains I have taken to impart some notion of taste and attic salt to a nation which has hitherto known nothing but how to eat, drink and fight. Still one would feign be useful and a word sown in fertile soil often produces fruit beyond expectation."

In Germany there has already lived for some time the great poet who will see the end of the Age of Frederick, the

Revolution, and the Age of Napoleon. Goethe is thirty-seven at the time of Frederick's death.

Frederick writes a general *Essay on Education* in which he states that the education of youth should be considered one of the principal objects of government. Yet he does so little for his own schools that Prussia acquires the reputation of being the country where scholars are fed like canaries and worked like asses.

He frequently attends the Italian opera. When the King enters the house trumpets and kettledrums burst forth. The audience is mostly a military one of generals and soldiers — the former sit with Frederick in the front of the pit — the latter stand up behind. Frederick leans against the partition between the pit and the orchestra looking over at the notes in front of the band director. He alone claps.

Frederick has his French Theatre. But when the Potato War breaks out he withdraws his support, as when after the Emperor's death he wrote to Voltaire to forget about the actresses.

"The present circumstances are preparing graver scenes," he says. "One can well dispense with comic ones, and so I strike off the salaries of all the actors and actresses of the French Theatre."

There is a National Theatre in Berlin now also. The directors, enterprising men, not only put on German plays but also foreign ones. What does Frederick think of it?

"If any one would convince himself," he writes, "what a want of taste has prevailed up to the present in Germany, let him only go to the public theatres. There he will see them performing the abominable plays of Shakespeare, which have been translated into our language, and the whole assembly taking the utmost delight in these ridiculous farces which are only fit for the savages in Canada. They sin against all the rules of the drama, rules established on a solid basis by Aristotle in his

Art of Poetry. Aristotle prescribes unity of place, unity of time and unity of action, as the only means of producing an interesting tragedy. In these English plays the action frequently occupies several years. At one moment working men and gravediggers come forward and speak, in the next princes and queens. How can this strange medley of the low and the lofty, of the burlesque and the tragic, touch and please? Shakespeare may deserve pardon for these extravagances, as at his time the art had only just begun to germinate, but there has just appeared *Götz von Berlichingen,* a detestable imitation of these wretched English plays. It is brought out on the stage, the audience applauds, and calls with enthusiasm for a repetition of this disgusting trash. I am well aware that there is no disputing about tastes, still I must be permitted to say that people who take as much pleasure in the feats of rope dancers and in puppet shows as in real drama would rather have their eyes gratified then their minds and prefer mere spectacle to that which moves the heart."

The introspective doubting Prince of Denmark is by no means in the style of the great Cæsars and Alexanders. And on the stage Frederick must have the line between patricians and plebians quite distinct. Good taste surely demands that royalty does not appear one moment, and gravediggers the next — this to his mind offends all the proprieties.

His mind is closed to all new ideas. He read Aristotle's *Poetica* in his youth, no poetry must ever be written that does not conform with the laws expressed here. Frederick wants a dictator in Thought as he has always been a dictator in Action — and he would like this dictator to be himself. He mistrusts all originality not his own, exactly as his father did. And when he is not stating his own prejudices, he parrots the prejudices of Voltaire.

Obstinacy . . . that obstinacy so outstanding in Frederick's

character. . . . Years ago he took his opinions ready made, first from the Ancients, then from Voltaire, now he will no more change them than he will give up a single village of Silesia. In Frederick's opposition to the National Theatre is also to be seen pique against people who dare to discover merit where he fails to find any — he is antagonistic both to Shakespeare and Lessing and to the German public which applauds them.

XXI

Hoe in one hand, book of verses in the other, he gardens like Virgil.

When Frederick loses his front teeth, and his fingers become so gouty that he has to give up playing the flute, as he can no longer hold it in either mouth or hand, he says, "I have lost my best friend."

But how genuine was ever his love for music — how much of it was a pose to release his "immoderate love of show"? For as soon as he himself can no longer perform on the flute he gives up his concerts, and takes no further interest in music. It may be that, like his French verse-making, playing the flute interested Frederick mainly because he had taken up this instrument in his youth and his father objected to it as effeminate.

A little man, below middle size and bent over . . . in a blue coat lined and faced with red . . . on his head the famous three-cornered hat with a dirty white feather wrapped horizontally around the brim, which he wears with one of the corners drooping over his eyes, and in which he sleeps instead of using a nightcap.

The King seen by tourists wears a front of black false hair, carelessly powdered. He continually takes Spanish snuff from a very large gold snuff box ornamented with diamonds. They see him walking along, accompanied by his greyhounds, or

perhaps riding one of his spirited English horses. Frederick never wears spurs. When he wants to go faster he strikes his mount between the ears with a little stick.

One favorite horse is named Condé. At Sans Souci this animal follows Frederick into the palace to be given sugar, melons and figs.

Another has the name of Cæsar. Cæsar may wander at will around the parade ground at Potsdam, and he stands in his stall without a halter. When the guard is being changed, the old horse, as it peregrinates around, often gets in the way. Then the man-machines must stop or go around it, for this is Frederick the Great's horse that blocks the passage.

Frederick used to send snuff boxes for presents. Now, having his porcelain factory, he sends sets of dishes. One of the dromedaries given him by Czernitschef always goes to Berlin with the King at carnival time carrying baggage. The other died.

The *Regie* brings into being many cartoons of Frederick. One day he sees a crowd of peasants staring up at a picture that has been posted on the side of a tavern. Consistent with his maxim of doing what he pleases and the people saying what they please, Frederick orders the cartoon to be hung lower " so that the people need not strain their necks to look at it." The King's coachman acting as cheerleader, the yokels shout *" Es lebe der Konig! "* and tear up the cartoon.

No one can tell Frederick that man is not evil. When one of his ministers tries to interest him in Rousseau's contention that man is naturally well-disposed, the refinements of civilization being responsible for his sins, Frederick exclaims —

" Ah, my dear Sulzer, you are not sufficiently well acquainted with the accursed race to which we belong."

How pleased he is when some incident occurs that shows him how his fame has spread! A Prussian sea-captain, sailing to the Canary Islands, is wrecked on the coast of Morocco. He and

his crew become slaves. But when the Emperor of Morocco is informed that these are subjects of the mighty King of Prussia who fought the world a few years ago, he releases them and gives them free passage home. Frederick has an account of all this printed in the Berlin papers.

XXII

For years before his death Frederick never took a bath. Dirt, with old age and disease, was a cause of his death.

The old man took pride in his dirt—in the dirty snuff-stained coat upon which he had exploded so many thousand times when he sneezed, in the dirty trousers which were his eventual pocket handkerchief and which reeked of animal excretions. His dirty malodorous cavalry boots Frederick took off most reluctantly, and he always slept in the same dirty old hat.

It satisfied some obscure necessity of his nature thus to juxtapose Dirt and Glory. . . . He knew people went away marvelling. . . . Actually, pagan Frederick, in his declining years, came very close to resembling one of those dirty old Christian hermits who lived in deserts and howled with the jackals.

But now and again he made a display of kingliness. Then Frederick would appear carrying a snuffbox, heavy and ponderous as one of those huge gold watches which travelling salesmen sometimes pull out of the pocket by an anchor chain, his unwashed body gaudy with satin and silk and jewelled garters, an impressive jewel-topped cane in his hand, prodigious rings on the fingers. But soon he was back in the old hat and boots again.

It was the same instinct that caused Frederick to give a year's imprisonment to valets whenever one of the greyhounds died, which caused him to have messengers travel miles to tell him

on the battlefield the state of health of his dogs, which caused him to order the guard to make detours around the old horse Cæsar on the parade ground.

The least thing associated with his person had become holy. Horses, dogs, dirty old hat, dirty old boots, dirty coat and dirty breeches were like relics of the saints. The dirtier Frederick became in his person the more the tourists gaped.

Zimmermann, Court Physician of Hanover, who was sent for by Frederick on two occasions, has left an account of these interviews. When Zimmermann arrived at Sans Souci, Catt took him in charge. Telling Zimmermann to come along, Catt, going ahead, suddenly opened a door. "Here, we are now at the King's room," said Catt.

Zimmermann's bulging eyes see an iron camp-bed without curtains standing in the middle of the room. There, on a very much worn mattress, lies Frederick the Great.

He has no covering but an old blue roquelaure, and the renowned cocked hat with a dirty white feather around the brim is on his head. This Frederick takes off politely.

"Come nearer, Monsieur Zimmermann," he says in a friendly voice, as Zimmermann stands gaping ten feet from the cot, too much awed to come further into the room.

In a daze of happiness at such a reception given him by the greatest monarch in Europe Zimmermann moves forward. But the King's next words bring the sweat of terror to his brow.

"*How many graveyards have you filled?*" asks Frederick sharply.

Zimmermann stammers, smirks, tries to see a joke in the question, but is disconcerted by the King's stern face. Perhaps in his youth he had done a little this way, but now . . . older . . . more experienced. . . . The King seems to think him a liar but lets it go at that.

He asks Zimmermann where he studied and what system of healing he uses. No particular system, replies Zimmermann, every case, he believes, requires its own individual method of treatment, and so — Nonsense, the King cuts him short, all doctors are slaves of systems. Continuing, he says —

"On the whole I love the Art of Medicine. My father wished me to get some knowledge in it. He often sent me into the hospitals, and even into those for venereal patients, with a view of warning me by example."

Then Frederick puts the Hanoverian doctor through quite an examination. How does he diagnose various diseases? Can he tell at a glance smallpox from the plague? What ideas has he on rhubarb as a purgative? Frederick tries to trip Zimmermann with contradictions but the doctor manages to stay on his feet. The King finally expresses gratification that Zimmermann seems to know his business.

"Your mode of proceeding altogether pleases me well. I rejoice to see how much our ways of thinking correspond."

The Hanoverian Court Physician promptly exclaims his astonishment at the deep and conclusive medical insights and judgments of the King. Frederick gives a history of his sicknesses. He complains greatly of hæmorrhoids. Zimmermann, who makes a suggestion on this subject, is again scared nearly out of his wits when Frederick suddenly sits bolt upright in bed and says, apparently to the wall — "Schmucker, write me that down!"

Frederick, when he holds an interview, nearly always has a secretary hidden just out of sight, but within hearing.

He speaks to Zimmermann about his gout. When Zimmermann says his heart is still strong, Frederick says —

"Do you know the reason why? Because my father never had syphilis. How much of this there is in France among the nobility! You must have noticed those feeble spectres, so common

across the Rhine, who suffer so dreadfully for the sins of their fathers."

He then confesses that much of his ill-health is the consequence of dissipation in youth — dating indeed from that first trip to Dresden when he was sixteen, and his father wrote to the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau, "Fritz goes around like a shadow." Frederick said he knew he was impotent the year before he became King.

XXIII

These facts about Frederick's health Zimmermann incorporated into his *Conversations with the King of Prussia,* which made such a stir when published after Frederick's death. Zimmermann may have been lying, but just why it is difficult to understand, as for all the abruptness with which he was treated on occasion, he came away from the interviews with Frederick walking on air at the familiar tone the great King had taken with him.

Frederick's main complaint, aside from the lesser of the two venereal diseases Zimmermann claimed he had contracted, was always obstruction of the bowels. Voltaire likewise suffered from this, and discussion of laxatives and enemas made up a regular part of their correspondence. No sooner, when Voltaire was with him in Prussia, did the King have a hearty bowel movement than he informed the Frenchman about it, and on one occasion Voltaire celebrated his success with a poem.

As in everything else Frederick showed contradictions here. He ate a great deal of fruit, he started rhubarb-growing in Prussia so that he would never be out of a supply, but he cancelled all the good done by eating heavy and greasy dishes. He would diet only as long as he was severely constipated or flatulent, then take no further care of himself.

But his body, like Voltaire's, had a marvellous vitality. As in

the case of his father, Frederick's life was in the main an outdoor one, but he differed from Frederick William in that he was never a heavy drinker. He got thinner instead of fatter as he aged.

Frederick did a great deal of self-doctoring. When he had bad gout attacks he cured himself by abstinence, sweating and strong purgatives.

Vienna always took a deep interest in the state of his health, and imagined he would die years before he did. In 1775 there was the imperial ambassador writing home that the King of Prussia would not last the month, as he had dropsy like his father. Frederick lived to be nearly twenty years older than his father.

He also suffered from asthma, and at the very end from both erysipelas and dropsy.

He became very gluttonous in his old age. He sought to indulge his gluttony and at the same time keep well by dosing himself with rhubarb and purgatives. At the close of the Potato War Frederick was attacked by unusually severe cramps in the stomach. When his doctor, Mohsen, suggested that he eat less Parmesan cheese, Frederick shook his cane at him and cried angrily—

"Get out of here!—How dare you reprimand me!—I have no further need for you. Begone!"

He always lost his temper with doctors who recommended eating less. He thought very highly of his own remedies and was constantly recommending them to friends.

When, in 1781, he was begged to postpone his annual reviewing tour, he told the doctor rudely, "You follow your business and I will mine. Until my last moment I mean to fulfill my duties as a king."

It was only his strong will-to-live, coupled with his vanity, which enabled him thus to abuse a naturally frail constitution.

XXIV

On the other side of the Rhine the most tremendous event of the century was rapidly approaching, but this King who at seventy had exactly the same ideas as at twenty, and who lived completely in the past, never saw it coming.

Voltaire, at the point of death, predicted — " Everything here suggests a great revolution." — Frederick thought this a fantastic prophecy.

He who at twenty was a rebel has become the most reactionary monarch of his day. But those dreams of " the prince who thinks like a man," really only represented Frederick's desire to get away from his domineering and brutal father. Long years now Frederick William lies in the Potsdam churchyard. With him it was thought would vanish the terrorism of a military dictatorship.

The Prussian fortresses have never been so crowded as they are now at the close of Frederick's reign. For slight breaches of military discipline, men rot away their lives in cells that never see the daylight. One officer gets twenty years for failure to report a tired sentry who fell asleep at his post. Flogging has never been so common. For minor offenses soldiers have to run the gauntlet a hundred times.

Frederick, at an inspection, will sometimes call out an officer to inquire if he is of noble birth. If he is not, the King taps him on the shoulder with his little stick — as he hits his horses between the ears, and as his father used to rap him on the head — and dismisses him in disgrace.

The father struck hard with a stick. The son taps playfully with his cane. The father was gross and natural — he had thirteen children. The son is childless — hates women — like a degenerate Roman emperor is more refined in his cruelty.

But Frederick condemns the Duke of Hesse for selling his

subjects to the English to fight in America. He writes essays on tolerance, and helps Voltaire in his war on religious persecution in France.

The father was redfaced, enormously fat. The son is thin and sallow, shuffles unsteadily, his hollow cheeks are red but with rouge, as he walks along accompanied by the slender elegant greyhounds he clicks his fingernails nervously.

Beside the hard and ruthless arrogance of the Philosopher King the vainglory of the Bourbons becomes a soft and frivolous thing. No monarch, despite his laughter at the gods, ever believed in the divine right of kings more firmly than did Frederick.

In Paris women sit knitting . . . knitting the names of the aristocrats who are to die. . . . Silent haggard women, with the ferocity born of years of oppression and degradation burning fiercely in their gaunt eyes. . . . In the French provinces bands of peasants fight with the tax collectors. — Where is the army? — Ah! the Bourbons, less wise than the Philosopher King, have allowed even their army to break away from them! The French army numbers many a young officer eager to put into practice the ideas on Human Rights and Liberty expressed by Voltaire and Rousseau — the French army contains Lafayettes who fought as volunteers across the seas for American independence.

Frederick sees nothing of all this. When he mentions the country across the Rhine it is of Louis XIV, of the writers he read in his youth, of the long dead generals Turenne and Condé that he speaks. Or it is to ask —

"Tell me, who is there in France nowadays fit to quote?"

XXV

At the Silesian reviews of 1785, when rain was falling in torrents, he sat on horseback soaked to the skin for six hours. Stubbornly he refused a cloak, nor would he allow his officers to wear any. He had a fever during the night, but so sure was he that without his personal supervision nothing would go off properly that next day he managed to be up for the review again.

This was in August. Before the grand autumn manoeuvres Frederick had pains in the legs, and a violent attack of apoplexy. He was led into the dining room on the three days of the manoeuvres so that he could give orders to his staff in the presence of the visiting celebrities.

From the date of this wilful exposure he was never well again. He had a continuous dry cough. Asthma choked him at night, so that he had to sit up to breathe. He began to drop asleep in the daytime. His stomach gave him constant trouble. But still he refused to accept the fact that it was no longer humanly possible for him to do everything himself. He fussed night and day over details.

He passed a winter of suffering. By February he had declined so that if he walked a dozen steps he was out of breath and tottering. His asthma attacks were constant. He slept mainly in the daytime in his chair. He was going blind.

The thought of suffocating to death while in a prone position was a dreadful one to Frederick. He kept sitting up, sitting up. . . .

He could not go to the spring reviews but he hoped desperately to be present at the great Fall manoeuvres.

Several times he tried to mount a horse, but always failed — he was too weak.

XXVI

His wife?

Now and again during his wars he had dropped her a short note.

She never came to Sans Souci. Once a year Frederick paid her a formal visit. She passed most of the time at her own palace of Schönhausen.

Now and then in Carnival season the King had dinner with her. . . . A stiff formal bow on entering. . . . Another bow on leaving. . . . No word spoken between them during the meal.

Once when the Queen was ill and Frederick inquired stiffly about her health, the news ran quickly all over Berlin.

She wrote to him during his last sickness. He wrote back — "Madam,

"I am much obliged for the wishes you deign to form for me, but a heavy fever I have taken hinders me from answering you."

These were his last words to her, written or spoken.

XXVII

On the seventeenth of August, 1786, at two in the morning, when Prussia is wrapped in darkness, he dies.

Almost to his last day Frederick has overeaten, while at the same time dosing himself with physic.

Across the Rhine, this very month, the thing is happening. Calonne has told Louis XVI that his country is bankrupt. With the calling together of the *Notables* France stands on the eve of the Revolution. One of Frederick's last visitors at Potsdam was Mirabeau.

For several days he has been in a state of semi-consciousness,

racked by continual coughing. "We are over the hill, we go better now," he is reported to have said, just before he dies.

One of his soldier-attendants, *kammerhuzzars,* takes the King on his knee to keep him from sliding down in the corner of his chair and suffocating, and there sits motionless with him for the two hours that precede his death.

So it is that the Philosopher King passes away in the arms of a soldier. But Frederick's real wish was to die on horseback — he always hoped that Death would seize him sitting astride the pulsating body of one of his magnificent English stallions.

POSTSCRIPT

I

AFTER Frederick's death, because of the rumors that an operation had deprived him of sex potency, the two doctors who examined the body were requested to sign a statement that this was false.

He was given a military funeral, dressed in the uniform of the famous First Battalion of Guards. He was buried, not at Sans Souci, but beside his father in the garrison church at Potsdam.

All Prussia rejoiced at his death. His successor promptly put an end to the *Regie*. De Launay left Prussia with a fortune, became governor of the Bastille, and was killed at its fall.

Over the Rhine the thing which Frederick never dreamed of took place.

And after the Revolution came Napoleon.

II

Frederick's whole life was devoted to destroying the might of Austria. His hope was to shift power from Vienna to Berlin, in the new German empire. Napoleon went a step further in this ambition, and tried to create by force a United States of Europe. Both failed.

Frederick was the first Prussian king who achieved an international renown.

As a general his fame needs considerable discounting. The soldier and the King were too inseparable for the first ever to

be estimated alone. Frederick could make blunder after blunder, but because he was King his army was never taken away from him.

In his own lifetime he undoubtedly did Prussia far more evil than good. At the time of his death it was still suffering from the Seven Years War of twenty-three years ago. He was benevolent in peace times only in the sense that he then gave back a small part of what he had taken away during war. He became the most reactionary of monarchs — had he lived the Prussian army would perhaps have crushed the Revolution and kept the Bourbons on the throne of France.

III

Spin the wheel!

Jena — where a Corsican commander gave the French their revenge for Rossbach. . . .

Bismarck, and the Empire. . . .

1914. . . .

The Republic of today.

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Vie Privée du Roi de Prusse.

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